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# SUMNER TODAY

*SELECTED ESSAYS OF*  
**WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER**  
*WITH COMMENTS BY*  
*AMERICAN LEADERS*

*EDITED BY*  
**MAURICE R. DAVIE**  
*PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY*  
*IN YALE UNIVERSITY*



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*The portrait of William Graham Sumner at 55 is by Deane Keller.*



## FOREWORD

JULIUS C. PETER

THE "Good Morning" column on the editorial page of the *Detroit Free Press* of May 7, 1940, was devoted to a little essay on war. Along towards the end, my eye racing ahead picked up "The late great William Graham Sumner, of Yale, wrote . . ." (quoting from the *Essays*), followed by "The hard headed Sumner picks the meat from the cocoanut more deftly than does the more brilliant writer and moralist —, . . ." I later ran into the editorial writer, Malcolm W. Bingay, who again expressed his amazement at the way quotations from Sumner fit into current happenings, as if written for the daily paper.

It is this essential timeliness which may serve as an excuse, if excuse be needed, for the publication of this volume. Sumner's penetrating clarity of vision, his detachment, his broad and sympathetic grasp of human affairs, give an ageless quality to his work.

It is not necessary to agree with Sumner. He stirs deeply. He irritates. He even infuriates. But he certainly does not leave one indifferent. He was and is a tremendous American force for intellectual sanity.

Sumner has been called the Darwin of the social sciences. To many of us, his Darwin-like singleness of mind, his solid belief in the inductive method, his willingness to revise his opinions on the introduction of new evidence, his selfless devotion to the seeking after truth, are as inspiring as his tangible scientific achievements. It is in keeping with the character of the man that this centenary volume should strike a note, not of eulogy but of reassessment, not of indiscriminating praise but of frank criticism.

The William Graham Sumner Club, organized in 1914, seeks to foster the scientific study of society. It is a voluntary organization of men and women who believe that only thus can we learn to cope with the problems of any society.



## PREFACE

**T**O signalize the centenary of William Graham Sumner, the Sumner Club is sponsoring the publication of this selection of his essays with comments by outstanding Americans. This volume, the idea for which was suggested by Dr. Alfred M. Lee, Director of the Club, is a non-commercial effort to utilize the centenary as a means for stimulating the scientific study of society. The essays touch upon a range of issues that are still as vital as they were during Sumner's lifetime. It is the belief of his admirers that, as Mr. Chenery expresses it, "Sumner is an admirable guide and counsellor in this troubled era."

The commentators represent widely divergent points of view. They do not agree with each other or with all of Sumner's conclusions. The essays thus serve as a forum for the expression of current thinking on basic social issues. The participants comprise a distinguished group: authors and editors, professors and college presidents, business executives and leaders in public affairs. Some are known as conservatives, others as liberals. Our original invitations included an equal number of both faiths. If a larger proportion of the former are included here, it is because the latter—many of them public office-holders—were less inclined to state their views. One consequence of this is that the New Deal receives more censure than praise. Several of the commentators charge it with distorting some of Sumner's concepts and others cite it as a current illustration of philosophies and practices that Sumner inveighed against.

The comments have not been edited so as to present only a favorable view of Sumner or to depict him as an infallible prophet. He would have permitted no such insincerity.

Though the contributors frequently take issue with Sumner and with each other—some finding his views antiquated, others holding them to be as true now as when he wrote, if not, indeed, timeless—all agree that he was one of the greatest pioneers in the scientific approach to social problems; a vigorous, incisive realist with insight into life as it is and an appreciation of the underlying social forces; a hater of sham, hypocrisy, and weak sentimentality; a hard-hitting individualist, and a champion of the common man.



Some of the commentators, like other readers of Sumner's essays, find that his forcefully expressed convictions, stated tersely and without the evidence, sound dogmatic, as indeed they do. This is perhaps inevitable in this type of writing, which attacks live issues not in cloistered academic halls but on the firing line. But those who are familiar with his long and documented works or have heard of his appalling industry and immense research (to which Professor Keller refers in a statement that follows) know full well the depth of his erudition, the breadth of his approach, his habit of working with facts, and his intellectual rectitude. Some allowance should be made for the manner of writing and speaking (many of the essays were originally addresses) and for the teacher's impulse to overstate in order to arouse independent thinking; yet the issues as he treated them are eternal, and what he had to say is fundamentally as pertinent now as when he set it down. As Dr. Vincent remarks in his comment, "His assertions were often too sweeping and unqualified. Yet his insistence on fundamental realities which cannot be safely ignored was of value in his own time, and may still be profitably considered in these days of turmoil and complexity."

MAURICE R. DAVIE

*June 30, 1940.*

## SKETCH OF WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER<sup>1</sup>

WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER was born at Paterson, New Jersey, October 30, 1840. He is the son of Thomas Sumner, who came to this country from England in 1836, and married here Sarah Graham, also of English birth. Thomas Sumner was a machinist, who worked at his trade until he was sixty years old, and never had any capital but what he saved out of a mechanic's wages. He was an entirely self-educated man, but always professed great obligations to mechanics' institutes and other associations of the kind, of whose opportunities he had made eager use in England. He was a man of the strictest integrity, a total abstainer, of domestic habits and indefatigable industry. He became enthusiastically interested in total abstinence when a young man in England, the method being that of persuasion and missionary effort. He used to describe his only attempt to make a speech in public, which was on this subject, when he completely failed. He had a great thirst for knowledge, and was thoroughly informed on modern English and American history and on the constitutional law of both countries. He made the education of his children his chief thought, and the only form of public affairs in which he took an active interest was that of schools. His contempt for demagogical arguments and for all the notions of the labor agitators, as well as for the entire gospel of gush, was that of a simple man with sturdy common-sense, who had never been trained to entertain any kind of philosophical abstractions. His plan was, if things did not go to suit him, to examine the situation, see what could be done, take a new start, and try again. For instance, inasmuch as the custom in New Jersey was store pay, and he did not like store pay, he moved to New England, where he found that he could get cash. He had decisive influence on the convictions and tastes of the subject of this sketch.

Professor Sumner grew up at Hartford, Connecticut, and was educated in the public schools of that city. The High School was then under the charge of Mr. T. W. T. Curtis, and the classical department under Mr. S. M. Capron. These teachers were equally remarkable, although in different ways, for their excellent influence on the

1. *The Popular Science Monthly*, June, 1889, XXXV, 261-268.

pupils under their care. There was an honesty and candor about both of them which were very healthful in example. They did very little "preaching," but their demeanor was in all respects such as to bear watching with the scrutiny of school-children and only gain by it. Mr. Curtis had great skill in the catechetical method, being able to lead a scholar by a series of questions over the track which must be followed to come to an understanding of the subject under discussion. Mr. Capron united dignity and geniality in a remarkable degree. The consequence was that he had the most admirable discipline, without the least feeling of the irksomeness of discipline on the part of his pupils. On the contrary, he possessed their tender and respectful affection. Mr. Capron was a man of remarkably few words, and he was a striking example of the power that may go forth from a man by what he is and does in the daily life of a schoolroom. Both these gentlemen employed in the schoolroom all the best methods of teaching now so much gloried in, without apparently knowing that they had any peculiar method at all. Professor Sumner has often declared in public that, as a teacher, he is deeply indebted to the sound traditions which he derived from these two men.

He graduated from Yale College in 1863, and in the summer of that year went to Europe. He spent the winter of 1863-1864 in Geneva, studying French and Hebrew with private instructors. He was at Göttingen for the next two years, studying ancient languages, history, especially church history, and biblical science. In answer to some questions, Professor Sumner has replied as follows:

"My first interest in political economy came from Harriet Martineau's 'Illustrations of Political Economy.' I came upon these by chance, in the library of the Young Men's Institute at Hartford, when I was thirteen or fourteen years old. I read them all through with the greatest avidity, some of them three or four times. There was very little literature at that time with which these books could connect. My teachers could not help me any, and there were no immediate relations between the topics of these books and any public interests of the time. We supposed then that free trade had sailed out upon the smooth sea, and was to go forward without further difficulty, so that what one learned of the fallacies of protection had only the same interest as what one learns about the fallacies of any old and abandoned error. In college we read and recited Wayland's 'Political Economy,' but I believe that my conceptions of capital, labor, money, and

trade, were all formed by those books which I read in my boyhood. In college the interest was turned rather on the political than on the economic element. It seemed to me then, however, that the war, with the paper money and the high taxation, must certainly bring about immense social changes and social problems, especially making the rich richer and the poor poorer, and leaving behind us the old ante-war period as one of primitive simplicity which could never return. I used to put this notion into college compositions, and laid the foundation in that way for the career which afterward opened to me.

"I enjoyed intensely the two years which I spent at Göttingen. I had the sense of gaining all the time exactly what I wanted. The professors whom I knew there seemed to me bent on seeking a clear and comprehensive conception of the matter under study (what we call 'the truth') without regard to any consequences whatever. I have heard men elsewhere talk about the nobility of that spirit; but the only *body* of men whom I have ever known who really lived by it, sacrificing wealth, political distinction, church preferment, popularity, or anything else for the truth of science, were the professors of biblical science in Germany. That was precisely the range of subjects which in this country was then treated with a reserve in favor of tradition which was prejudicial to everything which a scholar should value. So far as those men infected me with their spirit, they have perhaps added to my usefulness but not to my happiness. They also taught me rigorous and pitiless methods of investigation and deduction. Their analysis was their strong point. Their negative attitude toward the poetic element, their indifference to sentiment, even religious sentiment, was a fault, seeing that they studied the Bible as a religious book and not for philology and history only; but their method of study was nobly scientific, and was worthy to rank, both for its results and its discipline, with the best of the natural science methods. I sometimes wonder whether there is any one else in exactly the same position as I am, having studied biblical science with the Germans, and then later social science, to mark the striking contrast in method between the two. The later social science of Germany is the complete inversion in its method of that of German philology, classical criticism, and biblical science. Its subjection to political exigencies works upon it as disastrously as subjection to dogmatic creeds has worked upon biblical science in this country.

"I went over to Oxford in the spring of 1866. Having given up all my time in Germany to German books, I wanted to read English literature on the same subjects. I expected to find it rich and independent. I found that it consisted of secondhand adaptation of what I had just been studying. I was then quite thoroughly Teutonized, as all our young men are

likely to be after a time of study in Germany. I had not undergone the toning-down process which is necessary to bring a young American back to common sense, and I underrated the real services of many Englishmen to the Bible as a religious book—exactly the supplement which I then needed to my German education. Ullmann's 'Wesen des Christenthums,' which I had read at Göttingen, had steadied my religious faith, and I devoted myself at Oxford to the old Anglican divines and to the standard books of the Anglican communion. The only one of these which gave me any pleasure or profit was Hooker's 'Ecclesiastical Polity.' The first part of this book I studied with the greatest care, making an analysis of it and reviewing it repeatedly. It suited exactly those notions of constitutional order, adjustment of rights, constitutional authority, and historical continuity, in which I had been brought up, and it presented those doctrines of liberty under law applied both to church and state which commanded my enthusiastic acceptance. It also presented Anglicanism in exactly the aspect in which it was attractive to me. It re-awakened, however, all my love for political science, which was intensified by reading Buckle and also by another fact next to be mentioned.

"The most singular contrast between Göttingen and Oxford was this: at Göttingen everything one got came from the university, nothing from one's fellow-students. At Oxford it was not possible to get anything of great value from the university; but the education one could get from one's fellows was invaluable. There was a set of young fellows, or men reading for fellowships, there at that time, who were studying Hegel. I became intimate with several of them. Two or three of them have since died at an early age, disappointing hopes of useful careers. I never caught the Hegelian fever. I had heard Lotze at Göttingen, and found his suggestions very convenient to hold on by, at least for the time. We used, however, in our conversations at Oxford, to talk about Buckle and the ideas which he had then set afloat, and the question which occupied us the most was whether there could be a science of society, and, if so, where it should begin and how it should be built. We had all been eager students of what was then called the 'philosophy of history,' and I had also felt great interest in the idea of God in history, with which my companions did not sympathize. We agreed, however, that social science must be an induction from history, that Buckle had started on the right track, and that the thing to do was to study history. The difficulty which arrested us was that we did not see how the mass of matter to be collected and arranged could ever be so mastered that the induction could actually be performed if the notion of an 'induction from history' should be construed strictly. Young as we were, we never took up this crude notion as a real program of work.

I have often thought of it since, when I have seen the propositions of that sort which have been put forward within twenty years. I have lost sight of all my associates at Oxford who are still living. So far as I know, I am the only one of them who has become professionally occupied with social science."

Mr. Sumner returned to the United States in the autumn of 1866, having been elected to a tutorship in Yale College. Of this he says:

"The tutorship was a great advantage to me. I had expected to go to Egypt and Palestine in the next winter, but this gave me an opportunity to study further, and to acquaint myself with church affairs in the United States before a final decision as to a profession. I speedily found that there was no demand at all for 'biblical science'; that everybody was afraid of it, especially if it came with the German label on it. It was a case in which, if a man should work very hard and achieve remarkable results, the only consequence would be that he would ruin himself. At this time I undertook the translation of the volume of Lange's '*Commentary on Second Kings*.' While I was tutor I read Herbert Spencer's '*First Principles*'—at least the first part of it—but it made no impression upon me. The second part, as it dealt with evolution, did not then interest me. I also read his '*Social Statics*' at that period. As I did not believe in natural rights, or in his 'fundamental principle,' this book had no effect on me."

Mr. Sumner was ordained deacon at New Haven in December, 1867, and priest at New York, July, 1869. He became assistant to Dr. Washburn at Calvary Church, New York, in March, 1869. He was also editor of a Broad Church paper, which Dr. Washburn and some other clergymen started at this time. In September, 1870, he became rector of the Church of the Redeemer at Morristown, New Jersey.

"When I came to write sermons, I found to what a degree my interest lay in topics of social science and political economy. There was then no public interest in the currency and only a little in the tariff. I thought that these were matters of the most urgent importance, which threatened all the interests, moral, social, and economic, of the nation; and I was young enough to believe that they would all be settled in the next four or five years. It was not possible to preach about them, but I got so near to it that I was detected sometimes, as, for instance, when a New Jersey banker came to me, as I came down from the pulpit, and said, 'There was a great deal of political economy in that sermon.'

"It was at this period that I read, in an English magazine, the first of those essays of Herbert Spencer which were afterward collected into the volume 'The Study of Sociology.' These essays immediately gave me the lead which I wanted, to bring into shape the crude notions which had been floating in my head for five or six years, especially since the Oxford days. The conception of society, of social forces, and of the science of society there offered was just the one which I had been groping after but had not been able to reduce for myself. It solved the old difficulty about the relation of social science to history, rescued social science from the dominion of the cranks, and offered a definite and magnificent field for work, from which we might hope at last to derive definite results for the solution of social problems.

"It was at this juncture (1872) that I was offered the chair of Political and Social Science at Yale. I had always been very fond of teaching and knew that the best work I could ever do in the world would be in that profession; also, that I ought to be in an academical career. I had seen two or three cases of men who, in that career, would have achieved distinguished usefulness, but who were wasted in the parish and the pulpit."

Mr. Sumner returned to New Haven as professor in September, 1872. Of the further development of his opinions he says:

"I was definitely converted to evolution by Professor Marsh's horses some time about 1875 or 1876. I had re-read Spencer's 'Social Statics' and his 'First Principles,' the second part of the latter now absorbing all my attention. I now read all of Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, and quite a series of the natural scientists. I greatly regretted that I had no education in natural science, especially in biology; but I found that the 'philosophy of history' and the 'principles of philology,' as I had learned them, speedily adjusted themselves to the new conception, and won a new meaning and power from it. As Spencer's 'Principles of Sociology' was now coming out in numbers, I was constantly getting evidence that sociology, if it borrowed the theory of evolution in the first place, would speedily render it back again enriched by new and independent evidence. I formed a class to read Spencer's book in the parts as they came out, and believe that I began to interest men in this important department of study, and to prepare them to follow its development, years before any such attempt was made at any other university in the world. I have followed the growth of the science of sociology in all its branches and have seen it far surpass all the hope and faith I ever had in it. I have spent an immense amount of work on it, which has been lost because misdirected. The only merit I

can claim in that respect is that I have corrected my own mistakes. I have not published them for others to correct."

The above statement of the history of Professor Sumner's education shows the school of opinion to which he belongs. He adopts the conception of society according to which it is the seat of forces, and its phenomena are subject to laws which it is the business of science to investigate. He denies that there is anything arbitrary or accidental in social phenomena, or that there is any field in them for the arbitrary intervention of man. He therefore allows but very limited field for legislation. He holds that men must do with social laws what they do with physical laws—learn them, obey them, and conform to them. Hence he is opposed to state interference and socialism, and he advocates individualism and liberty. He has declared that bi-metallism is an absurdity, involving a contradiction of economic laws, and his attacks on protectionism have been directed against it as a philosophy of wealth and prosperity for the nation. As to politics he says:

"My only excursion into active politics has been a term as alderman. In 1872 I was one of the voters who watched with interest and hope the movement which led up to the 'Liberal' Convention at Cincinnati, that ended by nominating Greeley and Brown. The platform of that convention was very outspoken in its declarations about the policy to be pursued toward the South. I did not approve of the reconstruction policy. I wanted the South let alone and treated with patience. I lost my vote by moving to New Haven, and was contented to let it go that way. In 1876 I was of the same opinion about the South. If I had been asked what I wanted done, I should have tried to describe just what Mr. Hayes did do after he got in. I therefore voted for Mr. Tilden for President. In 1880 I did not vote. In 1884 I voted as a Mugwump for Mr. Cleveland. In 1888 I voted for him on the tariff issue."

A distinguished American economist, who is well acquainted with Professor Sumner's work, has kindly given us the following estimate of his method and of his position and influence as a public teacher:

"For exact and comprehensive knowledge Professor Sumner is entitled to take the first place in the ranks of American economists; and as a teacher he has no superior. His leading mental characteristic he has himself well stated in describing the characteristics of his former teachers at Göttin-



gen; namely, as 'bent on seeking a clear and comprehensive conception of the matter or "truth" under study, without regard to any consequences whatever,' and further, when in his own mind Professor Sumner is fully satisfied as to what the truth is, he has no hesitation in boldly declaring it, on every fitting occasion, without regard to consequences. If the theory is a 'spade,' he calls it a spade, and not an implement of husbandry. Sentimentalists, followers of precedent because it is precedent, and superficial reasoners find little favor, therefore, with Professor Sumner; and this trait of character has given him a reputation for coldness and lack of what may be called 'humanitarianism,' and has rendered one of his best essays, 'What Social Classes Owe to Each Other,' almost repulsive in respect to some of its conclusions. At the same time, the representatives of such antagonisms, if they are candid, must admit that Professor Sumner's logic can only be resisted by making their reason subordinate to sentiment. Professor Sumner is an earnest advocate of the utmost freedom in respect to all commercial exchanges; and the results of his experiences in the discussion of the relative merits and advantages of the systems of free trade and protection have been such that probably no defender of the latter would now be willing to meet him in a public discussion of these topics."

## SUMNER: HOW THE MAN APPEARS TO ONE WHO NEVER KNEW HIM

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

SUMNER, as a man of letters, has always seemed to me a divided soul—part scientist, part moralist, with the two elements in frequently unspoken conflict. As a sociologist, with the anthropological view of customs and ethics, he did more than anyone else in America to establish the relativistic opinion that there is nothing right or wrong save as the mores make it so. Yet in his writings as an economist, a publicist, an educator and a human being, he knew right from wrong—and thundered forth like old John Knox. Protectionism aroused his moral ire. Jobbery sickened him. Statism was bad; it undermined the human will. Imperialism was cheap-jack stuff. Novels like *Esther Waters* were not for the undergraduate mind. And so forth. The synthesis, the self-consistency, that one normally expects from a first-class mind is not to be found in Sumner. Perhaps he lived too soon and was too much of the burdened pioneer to discover a frame for a universally true naturalistic ethics in his studies of comparative cultures. Or perhaps he never quite freed himself from his early training as a theologian. In any case he never succeeded in “closing his system,” if I may be allowed to use the metaphysical lingo which Sumner so consciously disliked.

But if Sumner has always seemed to me a fascinating enigma whenever I try to square the *Folkways* with some of his essays on public questions of the Eighties and Nineties, the man has a greatness of character that transcends all questions of mere consistency. Sumner was a fighter; as Thomas Beer has said in *The Mauve Decade*, he “fought his way into authority, wrestling with the moralistic governors of Yale who dreaded his use of irreligious and rational texts; he would now fight anything from a bastard notion of currency to the government of the United States or, more powerful, the pruderies of a timid student. . . .” Since Sumner was of my grandfather’s generation, the characteristic flavor of this fighter necessarily came to me second-hand, through the influence of A. G. Keller and of my father, who was (and is) a great addict of Sumnerology. But second-

hand or not, the flavor of Sumner has always seemed tonic to me beyond the flavor of any immediate teacher I ever had. I have often listened to a graduate of Harvard speak of the influence, pervasive in Cambridge even after their passing, of James, Royce, and Santayana. Just as the Harvard philosophers have become part of the Cambridge atmosphere, so Sumner lingers in the intellectual tradition of Yale. For me, he is the tradition of Yale—the archetype of bold coolness, of originality tempered by scientific caution, that sums up the best that may be found in the spirit of Connecticut Yankee-dom.

Mortimer Adler has recently struck rich pay-dirt by writing a book called *How to Read a Book*. The Adlerian advice ultimately boils down to one admonition: argue with your author. To an old book reviewer, this advice is like coals to Newcastle; and for proof I can offer my copy of Keller's charming *Reminiscences of William Graham Sumner*, which captures the atmosphere of old New Haven with all the fidelity of a Proust conjuring up the scents and sounds of pre-1914 Paris. I read Keller's *Reminiscences* some seven years ago, but, looking through it, I can take the measure of Sumner merely by noting my underscorings and marginal jottings. On the personal side there is "the set of the mouth . . . stern and resolute . . . [he] could look far more disgusted, on occasion, than anyone else I ever saw. . . . I never saw him angry; disdain always seemed to me to take the place of anger among his facial expressions. . . ." There is, of course, the "magnificent baldness" and the "iron voice"; Van Wyck Brooks has recently spoken of a voice that fired like a howitzer. Of the limp handshake (something that I can't quite square with the total picture of Sumner) I have written, "horror of personal contact—like Boies Penrose's." This horror of contact was, undoubtedly, part of a fastidiousness that expressed itself in many ways—in dress, in the precise use of language, in a refusal to write for money or *réclame*, in a noningratiating attitude toward his students. I don't know why I happened to drag in the name of Boies Penrose for marginalia decoration—unless I happened to be thinking that Penrose, too, was disdainful of the "gushing" type of human being.

The disdainful Sumner, with eyes that looked greenish, believed in the ten-minute paper as one of the most effective of teaching devices

(certainly it was so in the hands of Keller), and in the margin of the *Reminiscences* I have noted: "What better training for a journalist!" Passing on, I find that I have underscored passages about Sumner's dogmatism: "What matter if Sumner was dogmatic? . . . You have, at least, something positive to correct or reject. . . . This is why so many men who have eventually come to dissent from Sumner's position . . . look back upon him as an intellectual awakener. . . ." The man, with his idiosyncrasies, his habit of saying "It don't," his rudenesses about guff and "metaphysics," went with the Yale of squat Osborn Hall, where Tinker and Sidney Mitchell and Keller all functioned as vivid, forthright personalities in the university of my time (1921-25).

Sumner's terse vigor, which is perhaps at its most telling in the peroration to his essay on "The Conquest of the United States by Spain," is stamped all over Keller's *Reminiscences*, a memoir that should be made the seed-book of a new Sumner biography. Sometimes the Sumner vigor overshoots its mark. The man wrote some remarkable papers and passages on the question of monopoly. Yet I feel that as a political economist he missed the ultimate import of the question; and I have never been able to understand his cavalier attitude to publicists (such as Henry George) and politicians (such as William Jennings Bryan) whose cardinal service was to call attention to the undeniable fact that when the few have much—and *use it wrongly*—the many will try to gang up on them and pull them down. But as Sumner himself pointed out, neither the Single Tax (which boils down to State proprietorship of the land) nor Social Ownership of the means of production is a way to deal with monopoly: Statism is the worst form of monopoly—the monopoly of a people's energies by a Committee. In reacting to phony individualists, to the men who praised "Billy" Sumner openly and voted for the protective tariff behind his back, a good many of my generation have embraced collectivist gods ranging all the way from Edward Bellamy to Marx and Lenin. Now, however, the tide is turning; and I have a hunch that Sumner, as a libertarian, will be rediscovered by many in the next decade. Certainly his casual remarks, scattered through the *Reminiscences*, betoken a realism that is needed everywhere. I know scores of "intellectuals" (Sumner would certainly have put the word in quotation marks) who were rudely surprised when "collective se-

curity" failed to prevent war. They might have been forewarned if they had read Alexander Hamilton's Paper Fifteen of *The Federalist*. But Sumner put it more simply than Hamilton when he remarked, apropos of the idea of the Hague Tribunal, "If people are mad enough, they will fight; if not, the ordinary means of diplomacy will do."

Today all the countries of Europe are, in the language of Peter Drucker, busy conducting a *blitzkrieg* against their middle classes, despoiling them of their wealth to pay for wars which poor men must fight for the benefit of top "committees." Long ago Sumner, in his papers on the "forgotten man" and on the relationship of the classes to each other, warned of the results of this; the middle classes, as he has said, are the only classes capable of organizing a society based on "rights," or a society that is tolerant of criticism of itself. Lacking any clear idea of how the problem of investment is to be handled in a mature economy that is, willy nilly, committed to *laissez-faire* principles, I am unable to accept all of Sumner's axioms about the abstract beneficence of "capital." Thrift is excellent when you are planning against the Winter; but the father who is "thrifty" with his pennies when his children need vitamins is a plain damned fool. The circumstances of 1940 differ from the circumstances of two generations ago, when Sumner was busy in his Lawrence Hall study or rambling out along the Ridge Road beyond East Rock. Nevertheless, in the years to come, the middle classes of the world will have to be saved or reconstituted if we are to escape from the tyrannies that bid fair to devastate our planet. Just how this is to be done will be the work of many thinkers; but when they begin they could do far worse than go to Sumner for initial clarification and initial drive. In his lifetime Sumner had no regard for intellectual fashion; and the currently "fashionable" have never had any particular regard for him. But I miss my guess if Sumner is not at the bottom of the next "fashion"—or long-term trend in the thinking American's attitude toward the society in which, for better or worse, he must live. Sumner despised "prophets"; and it would be a misfortune to return to him in anything like the mood of the unquestioning disciple. But if you come to him in an argumentative mood you will soon be convinced, at least on some scores. And what better fate could Sumner ask?

## HOW SUMNER ARRIVED AT HIS CONCLUSIONS

ALBERT GALLOWAY KELLER

THE following representative samples of Sumner's shorter pieces speak for themselves. They are a few out of many. They are both timely and timeless. Truth arrived at by Sumner's methods stays put.

What cannot be exhibited with brevity is those methods. And yet the very reason for selecting Sumner as a figure-head for a Club of this order is that he arrived at his conclusions, however tersely stated, by paths that the approved sciences—approved by the confidence we repose in them by intrusting our lives and destinies to them—have consistently followed.

To anyone who has made intimate acquaintance with *Folkways* or *The Science of Society*, Sumner's methods are outstandingly apparent. They consist, in essence, in the assembling of a large body of verified and re-verified facts of experience, and then in letting these facts tell their own story, under the application of what Huxley called "trained and organized common sense," that is to say, the inductive method of science.

Critics of Sumner's conclusions have seldom been aware of the mass of materials upon which his inferences were formed, corrected, and re-formed. They have taken his utterances to be dogmatic statements of preconceived opinions: deductions from a priori major premises such as undisciplined minds have been prone themselves to make. This impression has speedily faded from the minds of those who have studied his longer works. It would be dissipated as regards the shorter ones by a realization of the labor and study that lay behind the conclusions which the Essays offer.

There is no way, I repeat, of exhibiting this background by sample to him who reads as he runs. In *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin repeatedly chafes over his inability to cite much, in so brief a compass, from his mountains of evidence; and he begs the reader to suspend judgment until full data can be published. But it turned out

that he did not need to present his encyclopaedic evidence, because there were so many investigators, even so many "hodmen of science," who knew the facts within their limited fields and saw them fall naturally into the categories set forth by a master in synthesis. But Sumner, another master of synthesis, has had no such clientele of fact-lovers and instance-gatherers awaiting him, no such body of objective-minded cultivators of limited portions of the field which he so spaciously covered.

Any portrayal of Sumner's methods for those who have had no time or occasion to study his longer works must be presented descriptively, if at all. Here, then, is an attempt to sketch his colossal industry in the collection of materials and his wrestlings with them to force them to divulge their meaning.

The brute bulk of Sumner's materials is a silent witness to the labor which he devoted to investigation. No one who has ever cast his eye over them has failed to be staggered by their sheer quantity. There were, when he ceased to collect, fifty-two drawers and boxes of close-packed notes, averaging some three thousand sheets of uniform size to the receptacle. No one helped him gather these materials; they were all out of his own reading and many of them in his own handwriting, the majority being excerpts marked by him for a copyist. He had no "shop," and his single copyist cost him about twenty dollars a month during the academic year.

These notes reveal a knowledge of some thirteen languages. Sumner's insistence upon getting to sources may be illustrated by the fact that what set him to learning Russian was a determination to get to the truth about the Russian *mir*, or village community; and it may be added here that he spent one summer reviewing his college mathematics and taking lessons in calculus in order to see for himself whether there was anything for him in mathematical economics. His life-reading, in all lines, including history, theology, metaphysics, and general literature, is but poorly represented by the combined bibliographies of his several works. He was quite a novel-reader, and used to contend that fiction was an outstanding agency for apprehension of the mores of a period and for diffusion of culture within the international range.

These materials were classified and re-classified over years, and not according to any preconceived set of rubrics. When enough materials

had drifted together, he inserted a marker to indicate their special character, located them where they seemed to belong among the other packets, and went on with his collecting. There was always a limbo of labelled packets awaiting satisfactory location. The only principle he seems to have had in mind was that like should go with like, which is the elementary criterion of classification. He had nothing whatever to prove, but only an intellectual curiosity that prompted search and research, verification and re-verification.

Enough has been recounted to afford some idea of Sumner's industry in assembling materials. He broke down a sturdy physique untimely by his veritable dissipation in toil. And it must not be overlooked that, during all these years, he taught a heavy schedule of large classes, took an arduous part in college administration, was a leading figure on the state board of education, gave not a few public lectures, and wrote books and essays footing up to a bibliography of considerably over three hundred entries.

Sumner's relentless pursuit of the facts of experience was matched by his conscientiousness in dealing with them. To us who were undergraduate students under him, and doubtless to the general reader of his shorter pieces, he seemed positive to the degree of dogmatism. That is exactly what the teacher of beginners ought to be. Beginners need a firm footing to start with, or they get nowhere. It does not matter whether or not they repudiate it later on; there must be a stable take-off, or there is no leap. I advert to this matter, somewhat irrelevant to my subject, in order to remark that the very center of Sumner's interest was always in his teaching. He had the simple and clear conviction that he was employed to teach; and whatever else he did was always focussed upon the exposition of what he thought to be the truth. That was the main reason for his strenuous efforts to identify the truth. He was no man to pursue research for its own sake. From his young manhood on, he cherished the hope that if he worked hard enough he might, before he died, discover what would be of use to men in living. And the men he had in the front of his mind were the students who sat before him.

When one came to study at his side, instead of under him, the first experience encountered disposed of that undergraduate impression about dogmatism. We were introduced to the shop, so to speak, and began to apprehend not only the toil but also the painstaking which



lay behind the positiveness to which we had been accustomed. We began to see what established a real right to an opinion. We speedily came wholesomely to share Sumner's contempt for the bright idea, not to mention the utopian phantasm; the opinion with no right behind it; the process of "wishful thinking," so natural, so attractive, and so damnable.

"Intellectual arrogance," of which Sumner has been accused, was a charge at which his graduate students would have jeered. We soon saw that Sumner had no great opinion of his own accomplishments; he acted like a man who faced a task so large that whatever he might do could be but little. He cited his own limitations, reviewed his errors, and was always solicitous that we should avoid the pitfalls into which he had slipped. He welcomed all new facts with eagerness. His attitude was distinctly one of humility. He was ready to reconsider anything. He was keen to learn from the youngest of us, welcoming our little offerings even when they were an old story to him. We were convinced that he cared for nothing whatsoever except the truth; and we saw how he had arrived at his firm conceptions, such as that of antagonistic coöperation. And so he quickly drew us into the proud feeling that we belonged with him among the fraternity of truth-seekers. That impression of intellectual arrogance was derived from his impatience with ignorant cocksureness. He always bristled up when he encountered pretension, affectation, or sham, and replied curtly to many a poseur. He was considerate; helpful—for instance, in keeping a student's or colleague's needs in mind, calling attention by post-card to new books relating to any co-worker's interest; encouraging; comforting in adversity.

Here is a brief glimpse into Sumner's work-shop—a short sojourn behind the scenes. It is the spirit of the true scientist, as so revealed, that the Sumner Club seeks to embody and perpetuate.

***ESSAYS WITH COMMENTS***



## *THE FORGOTTEN MAN<sup>1</sup>*

**I** PROPOSE to discuss one of the most subtle and widespread social fallacies. It consists in the impression made on the mind for the time being by a particular fact, or by the interests of a particular group of persons, to which attention is directed while other facts or the interests of other persons are entirely left out of account. I shall give a number of instances and illustrations of this in a moment, and I cannot expect you to understand what is meant from an abstract statement until these illustrations are before you, but just by way of a general illustration I will put one or two cases.

Whenever a pestilence like yellow fever breaks out in any city, our attention is especially attracted towards it, and our sympathies are excited for the sufferers. If contributions are called for, we readily respond. Yet the number of persons who die prematurely from consumption every year greatly exceeds the deaths from yellow fever or any similar disease when it occurs, and the suffering entailed by consumption is very much greater. The suffering from consumption, however, never constitutes a public question or a subject of social discussion. If an inundation takes place anywhere, constituting a public calamity (and an inundation takes place somewhere in the civilized world nearly every year), public attention is attracted and public appeals are made, but the losses by great inundations must be insignificant compared with the losses by runaway horses, which, taken separately, scarcely obtain mention in a local newspaper. In hard times insolvent debtors are a large class. They constitute an interest and are able to attract public attention, so that social philosophers discuss their troubles and legislatures plan measures of relief. Insolvent debtors, however, are an insignificant body compared with the victims of commonplace misfortune, or accident, who are isolated, scattered, ungrouped and ungeneralized, and so are never made the object of discussion or relief. In seasons of ordinary prosperity, persons who become insolvent have to get out of their troubles as they can. They have no hope of relief from the legislature. The number of insolvents during a series of years of general prosperity, and

1. The original lecture on this subject, delivered January 30, 1883, in the Brooklyn Historical Society rooms.

their losses, greatly exceed the number and losses during a special period of distress.

These illustrations bring out only one side of my subject, and that only partially. It is when we come to the proposed measures of relief for the evils which have caught public attention that we reach the real subject which deserves our attention. As soon as A observes something which seems to him to be wrong, from which X is suffering, A talks it over with B, and A and B then propose to get a law passed to remedy the evil and help X. Their law always proposes to determine what C shall do for X or, in the better case, what A, B and C shall do for X. As for A and B, who get a law to make themselves do for X what they are willing to do for him, we have nothing to say except that they might better have done it without any law, but what I want to do is to look up C. I want to show you what manner of man he is. I call him the Forgotten Man. Perhaps the appellation is not strictly correct. He is the man who never is thought of. He is the victim of the reformer, social speculator and philanthropist, and I hope to show you before I get through that he deserves your notice both for his character and for the many burdens which are laid upon him.

No doubt one great reason for the phenomenon which I bring to your attention is the passion for reflection and generalization which marks our period. Since the printing press has come into such wide use, we have all been encouraged to philosophize about things in a way which was unknown to our ancestors. They lived their lives out in positive contact with actual cases as they arose. They had little of this analysis, introspection, reflection and speculation which have passed into a habit and almost into a disease with us. Of all things which tempt to generalization and to philosophizing, social topics stand foremost. Each one of us gets some experience of social forces. Each one has some chance for observation of social phenomena. There is certainly no domain in which generalization is easier. There is nothing about which people dogmatize more freely. Even men of scientific training in some department in which they would not tolerate dogmatism at all will not hesitate to dogmatize in the most reckless manner about social topics. The truth is, however, that science, as yet, has won less control of social phenomena than of any other class of phenomena. The most complex and difficult subject which we now have to study is the constitution of human society, the forces which

operate in it, and the laws by which they act, and we know less about these things than about any others which demand our attention. In such a state of things, over-hasty generalization is sure to be extremely mischievous. You cannot take up a magazine or newspaper without being struck by the feverish interest with which social topics and problems are discussed, and if you were a student of social science, you would find in almost all these discussions evidence, not only that the essential preparation for the discussion is wanting, but that the disputants do not even know that there is any preparation to be gained. Consequently we are bewildered by contradictory dogmatizing. We find in all these discussions only the application of pet notions and the clashing of contradictory "views." Remedies are confidently proposed for which there is no guarantee offered except that the person who prescribes the remedy says that he is sure it will work. We hear constantly of "reform," and the reformers turn out to be people who do not like things as they are and wish that they could be made nicer. We hear a great many exhortations to make progress from people who do not know in what direction they want to go. Consequently social reform is the most barren and tiresome subject of discussion amongst us, except æsthetics.

I suppose that the first chemists seemed to be very hard-hearted and unpoetical persons when they scouted the glorious dream of the alchemists that there must be some process for turning base metals into gold. I suppose that the men who first said, in plain, cold assertion, there is no fountain of eternal youth, seemed to be the most cruel and cold-hearted adversaries of human happiness. I know that the economists who say that if we could transmute lead into gold, it would certainly do us no good and might do great harm, are still regarded as unworthy of belief. Do not the money articles of the newspapers yet ring with the doctrine that we are getting rich when we give cotton and wheat for gold rather than when we give cotton and wheat for iron?

Let us put down now the cold, hard fact and look at it just as it is. There is no device whatever to be invented for securing happiness without industry, economy, and virtue. We are yet in the empirical stage as regards all our social devices. We have done something in science and art in the domain of production, transportation and exchange. But when you come to the laws of the social order, we know

very little about them. Our laws and institutions by which we attempt to regulate our lives under the laws of nature which control society are merely a series of haphazard experiments. We come into collision with the laws and are not intelligent enough to understand wherein we are mistaken and how to correct our errors. We persist in our experiments instead of patiently setting about the study of the laws and facts in order to see where we are wrong. Traditions and formulæ have a dominion over us in legislation and social customs which we seem unable to break or even to modify.

For my present purpose I ask your attention for a few moments to the notion of liberty, because the Forgotten Man would no longer be forgotten where there was true liberty. You will say that you know what liberty is. There is no term of more common or prouder use. None is more current, as if it were quite beyond the need of definition. Even as I write, however, I find in a leading review a new definition of civil liberty. Civil liberty the writer declares to be "the result of the restraint exercised by the sovereign people on the more powerful individuals and classes of the community, preventing them from availing themselves of the excess of their power to the detriment of the other classes." You notice here the use of the words "sovereign people" to designate a class of the population, not the nation as a political and civil whole. Wherever "people" is used in such a sense, there is always fallacy. Furthermore, you will recognize in this definition a very superficial and fallacious construction of English constitutional history. The writer goes on to elaborate that construction and he comes out at last with the conclusion that "a government by the people can, in no case, become a paternal government, since its law-makers are its mandataries and servants carrying out its will, and not its fathers or its masters." This, then, is the point at which he desires to arrive, and he has followed a familiar device in setting up a definition to start with which would produce the desired deduction at the end.

In the definition the word "people" was used for a class or section of the population. It is now asserted that if *that* section rules, there can be no paternal, that is, undue, government. That doctrine, however, is the very opposite of liberty and contains the most vicious error possible in politics. The truth is that cupidity, selfishness, envy, malice, lust, vindictiveness, are constant vices of human nature. They

are not confined to classes or to nations or particular ages of the world. They present themselves in the palace, in the parliament, in the academy, in the church, in the workshop, and in the hovel. They appear in autocracies, theocracies, aristocracies, democracies, and ochlocracies all alike. They change their masks somewhat from age to age and from one form of society to another. All history is only one long story to this effect: men have struggled for power over their fellow-men in order that they might win the joys of earth at the expense of others and might shift the burdens of life from their own shoulders upon those of others. It is true that, until this time, the proletariat, the mass of mankind, have rarely had the power and they have not made such a record as kings and nobles and priests have made of the abuses they would perpetrate against their fellow-men when they could and dared. But what folly it is to think that vice and passion are limited by classes, that liberty consists only in taking power away from nobles and priests and giving it to artisans and peasants and that these latter will never abuse it! They will abuse it just as all others have done unless they are put under checks and guarantees, and there can be no civil liberty anywhere unless rights are guaranteed against all abuses, as well from proletarians as from generals, aristocrats, and ecclesiastics.

Now what has been amiss in all the old arrangements? The evils of the old military and aristocratic governments was that some men enjoyed the fruits of other men's labor; that some persons' lives, rights, interests and happiness were sacrificed to other persons' cupidity and lust. What have our ancestors been striving for, under the name of civil liberty, for the last five hundred years? They have been striving to bring it about that each man and woman might live out his or her life according to his or her own notions of happiness and up to the measure of his or her own virtue and wisdom. How have they sought to accomplish this? They have sought to accomplish it by setting aside all arbitrary personal or class elements and introducing the reign of law and the supremacy of constitutional institutions like the jury, the habeas corpus, the independent judiciary, the separation of church and state, and the ballot. Note right here one point which will be important and valuable when I come more especially to the case of the Forgotten Man: whenever you talk of liberty, you must have *two* men in mind. The sphere of rights of one of these men trenches upon



that of the other, and whenever you establish liberty for the one, you repress the other. Whenever absolute sovereigns are subjected to constitutional restraints, you always hear them remonstrate that their liberty is curtailed. So it is, in the sense that their power of determining what shall be done in the state is limited below what it was before and the similar power of other organs in the state is widened. Whenever the privileges of an aristocracy are curtailed, there is heard a similar complaint. The truth is that the line of limit or demarcation between classes as regards civil power has been moved and what has been taken from one class is given to another.

We may now, then, advance a step in our conception of civil liberty. It is the status in which we find the true adjustment of rights between classes and individuals. Historically, the conception of civil liberty has been constantly changing. The notion of rights changes from one generation to another and the conception of civil liberty changes with it. If we try to formulate a true definition of civil liberty as an ideal thing towards which the development of political institutions is all the time tending, it would be this: Civil liberty is the status of the man who is guaranteed by law and civil institutions the exclusive employment of all his own powers for his own welfare.

This definition of liberty or civil liberty, you see, deals only with concrete and actual relations of the civil order. There is some sort of a poetical and metaphysical notion of liberty afloat in men's minds which some people dream about but which nobody can define. In popular language it means that a man may do as he has a mind to. When people get this notion of liberty into their heads and combine with it the notion that they live in a free country and ought to have liberty, they sometimes make strange demands upon the state. If liberty means to be able to do as you have a mind to, there is no such thing in this world. Can the Czar of Russia do as he has a mind to? Can the Pope do as he has a mind to? Can the President of the United States do as he has a mind to? Can Rothschild do as he has a mind to? Could a Humboldt or a Faraday do as he had a mind to? Could a Shakespeare or a Raphael do as he had a mind to? Can a tramp do as he has a mind to? Where is the man, whatever his station, possessions, or talents, who can get any such liberty? There is none. There is a doctrine floating about in our literature that we are born to the inheritance of certain rights. That is another glorious

dream, for it would mean that there was something in this world which we got for nothing. But what is the truth? We are born into no right whatever but what has an equivalent and corresponding duty right alongside of it. There is no such thing on this earth as something for nothing. Whatever we inherit of wealth, knowledge, or institutions from the past has been paid for by the labor and sacrifice of preceding generations; and the fact that these gains are carried on, that the race lives and that the race can, at least within some cycle, accumulate its gains, is one of the facts on which civilization rests. The law of the conservation of energy is not simply a law of physics; it is a law of the whole moral universe, and the order and truth of all things conceivable by man depends upon it. If there were any such liberty as that of doing as you have a mind to, the human race would be condemned to everlasting anarchy and war as these erratic wills crossed and clashed against each other. True liberty lies in the equilibrium of rights and duties, producing peace, order, and harmony. As I have defined it, it means that a man's right to take power and wealth out of the social product is measured by the energy and wisdom which he has contributed to the social effort.

Now if I have set this idea before you with any distinctness and success, you see that civil liberty consists of a set of civil institutions and laws which are arranged to act as impersonally as possible. It does not consist in majority rule or in universal suffrage or in elective systems at all. These are devices which are good or better just in the degree in which they secure liberty. The institutions of civil liberty leave each man to run his career in life in his own way, only guaranteeing to him that whatever he does in the way of industry, economy, prudence, sound judgment, etc., shall redound to his own welfare and shall not be diverted to some one else's benefit. Of course it is a necessary corollary that each man shall also bear the penalty of his own vices and his own mistakes. If I want to be free from any other man's dictation, I must understand that I can have no other man under my control.

Now with these definitions and general conceptions in mind, let us turn to the special class of facts to which, as I said at the outset, I invite your attention. We see that under a régime of liberty and equality before the law, we get the highest possible development of independence, self-reliance, individual energy, and enterprise, but we

get these high social virtues at the expense of the old sentimental ties which used to unite baron and retainer, master and servant, sage and disciple, comrade and comrade. We are agreed that the son shall not be disgraced even by the crime of the father, much less by the crime of a more distant relative. It is a humane and rational view of things that each life shall stand for itself alone and not be weighted by the faults of another, but it is useless to deny that this view of things is possible only in a society where the ties of kinship have lost nearly all the intensity of poetry and romance which once characterized them. The ties of sentiment and sympathy also have faded out. We have come, under the régime of liberty and equality before the law, to a form of society which is based not on status, but on free contract. Now a society based on status is one in which classes, ranks, interests, industries, guilds, associations, etc., hold men in permanent relations to each other. Custom and prescription create, under status, ties, the strength of which lies in sentiment. Feeble remains of this may be seen in some of our academical societies to-day, and it is unquestionably a great privilege and advantage for any man in our society to win an experience of the sentiments which belong to a strong and close association, just because the chances for such experience are nowadays very rare. In a society based on free contract, men come together as free and independent parties to an agreement which is of mutual advantage. The relation is rational, even rationalistic. It is not poetical. It does not exist from use and custom, but for reasons given, and it does not endure by prescription but ceases when the reason for it ceases. There is no sentiment in it at all. The fact is that, under the régime of liberty and equality before the law, there is no place for sentiment in trade or politics as public interests. Sentiment is thrown back into private life, into personal relations, and if ever it comes into a public discussion of an impersonal and general public question it always produces mischief.

Now you know that "the poor and the weak" are continually put forward as objects of public interest and public obligation. In the appeals which are made, the terms "the poor" and "the weak" are used as if they were terms of exact definition. Except the pauper, that is to say, the man who cannot earn his living or pay his way, there is no possible definition of a poor man. Except a man who is incapacitated by vice or by physical infirmity, there is no definition of

a weak man. The paupers and the physically incapacitated are an inevitable charge on society. About them no more need be said. But the weak who constantly arouse the pity of humanitarians and philanthropists are the shiftless, the imprudent, the negligent, the impractical, and the inefficient, or they are the idle, the intemperate, the extravagant, and the vicious. Now the troubles of these persons are constantly forced upon public attention, as if they and their interests deserved especial consideration, and a great portion of all organized and unorganized effort for the common welfare consists in attempts to relieve these classes of people. I do not wish to be understood now as saying that nothing ought to be done for these people by those who are stronger and wiser. That is not my point. What I want to do is to point out the thing which is overlooked and the error which is made in all these charitable efforts. The notion is accepted as if it were not open to any question that if you help the inefficient and vicious you may gain something for society or you may not, but that you lose nothing. This is a complete mistake. Whatever capital you divert to the support of a shiftless and good-for-nothing person is so much diverted from some other employment, and that means from somebody else. I would spend any conceivable amount of zeal and eloquence if I possessed it to try to make people grasp this idea. Capital is force. If it goes one way it cannot go another. If you give a loaf to a pauper you cannot give the same loaf to a laborer. Now this other man who would have got it but for the charitable sentiment which bestowed it on a worthless member of society is the Forgotten Man. The philanthropists and humanitarians have their minds all full of the wretched and miserable whose case appeals to compassion, attacks the sympathies, takes possession of the imagination, and excites the emotions. They push on towards the quickest and easiest remedies and they forget the real victim.

Now who is the Forgotten Man? He is the simple, honest laborer, ready to earn his living by productive work. We pass him by because he is independent, self-supporting, and asks no favors. He does not appeal to the emotions or excite the sentiments. He only wants to make a contract and fulfill it, with respect on both sides and favor on neither side. He must get his living out of the capital of the country. The larger the capital is, the better living he can get. Every particle of capital which is wasted on the vicious, the idle, and the

shiftless is so much taken from the capital available to reward the independent and productive laborer. But we stand with our backs to the independent and productive laborer all the time. We do not remember him because he makes no clamor; but I appeal to you whether he is not the man who ought to be remembered first of all, and whether, on any sound social theory, we ought not to protect him against the burdens of the good-for-nothing. In these last years I have read hundreds of articles and heard scores of sermons and speeches which were really glorifications of the good-for-nothing, as if these were the charge of society, recommended by right reason to its care and protection. We are addressed all the time as if those who are respectable were to blame because some are not so, and as if there were an obligation on the part of those who have done their duty towards those who have not done their duty. Every man is bound to take care of himself and his family and to do his share in the work of society. It is totally false that one who has done so is bound to bear the care and charge of those who are wretched because they have not done so. The silly popular notion is that the beggars live at the expense of the rich, but the truth is that those who eat and produce not, live at the expense of those who labor and produce. The next time that you are tempted to subscribe a dollar to a charity, I do not tell you not to do it, because after you have fairly considered the matter, you may think it right to do it, but I do ask you to stop and remember the Forgotten Man and understand that if you put your dollar in the savings bank it will go to swell the capital of the country which is available for division amongst those who, while they earn it, will reproduce it with increase.

Let us now go on to another class of cases. There are a great many schemes brought forward for "improving the condition of the working classes." I have shown already that a free man cannot take a favor. One who takes a favor or submits to patronage demeans himself. He falls under obligation. He cannot be free and he cannot assert a station of equality with the man who confers the favor on him. The only exception is where there are exceptional bonds of affection or friendship, that is, where the sentimental relation supersedes the free relation. Therefore, in a country which is a free democracy, all propositions to do something for the working classes have an air of patronage and superiority which is impertinent and out of place. No

one can do anything for anybody else unless he has a surplus of energy to dispose of after taking care of himself. In the United States, the working classes, technically so called, are the strongest classes. It is they who have a surplus to dispose of if anybody has. Why should anybody else offer to take care of them or to serve them? They can get whatever they think worth having and, at any rate, if they are free men in a free state, it is ignominious and unbecoming to introduce fashions of patronage and favoritism here. A man who, by superior education and experience of business, is in a position to advise a struggling man of the wages class, is certainly held to do so and will, I believe, always be willing and glad to do so; but this sort of activity lies in the range of private and personal relations.

I now, however, desire to direct attention to the public, general, and impersonal schemes, and I point out the fact that, if you undertake to lift anybody, you must have a fulcrum or point of resistance. All the elevation you give to one must be gained by an equivalent depression on some one else. The question of gain to society depends upon the balance of the account, as regards the position of the persons who undergo the respective operations. But nearly all the schemes for "improving the condition of the working man" involve an elevation of some working men at the expense of other working men. When you expend capital or labor to elevate some persons who come within the sphere of your influence, you interfere in the conditions of competition. The advantage of some is won by an equivalent loss of others. The difference is not brought about by the energy and effort of the persons themselves. If it were, there would be nothing to be said about it, for we constantly see people surpass others in the rivalry of life and carry off the prizes which the others must do without. In the cases I am discussing, the difference is brought about by an interference which must be partial, arbitrary, accidental, controlled by favoritism and personal preference. I do not say, in this case, either, that we ought to do no work of this kind. On the contrary, I believe that the arguments for it quite outweigh, in many cases, the arguments against it. What I desire, again, is to bring out the forgotten element which we always need to remember in order to make a wise decision as to any scheme of this kind. I want to call to mind the Forgotten Man, because, in this case also, if we recall him and go to look for him, we shall find him patiently and perseveringly,

manfully and independently struggling against adverse circumstances without complaining or begging. If, then, we are led to heed the groaning and complaining of others and to take measures for helping these others, we shall, before we know it, push down this man who is trying to help himself.

Let us take another class of cases. So far we have said nothing about the abuse of legislation. We all seem to be under the delusion that the rich pay the taxes. Taxes are not thrown upon the consumers with any such directness and completeness as is sometimes assumed; but that, in ordinary states of the market, taxes on houses fall, for the most part, on the tenants and that taxes on commodities fall, for the most part, on the consumers, is beyond question. Now the state and municipality go to great expense to support policemen and sheriffs and judicial officers, to protect people against themselves, that is, against the results of their own folly, vice, and recklessness. Who pays for it? Undoubtedly the people who have not been guilty of folly, vice, or recklessness. Out of nothing comes nothing. We cannot collect taxes from people who produce nothing and save nothing. The people who have something to tax must be those who have produced and saved.

When you see a drunkard in the gutter, you are disgusted, but you pity him. When a policeman comes and picks him up you are satisfied. You say that "society" has interfered to save the drunkard from perishing. Society is a fine word, and it saves us the trouble of thinking to say that society acts. The truth is that the policeman is paid by somebody, and when we talk about society we forget who it is that pays. It is the Forgotten Man again. It is the industrious workman going home from a hard day's work, whom you pass without noticing, who is mulcted of a percentage of his day's earnings to hire a policeman to save the drunkard from himself. All the public expenditure to prevent vice has the same effect. Vice is its own curse. If we let nature alone, she cures vice by the most frightful penalties. It may shock you to hear me say it, but when you get over the shock, it will do you good to think of it: a drunkard in the gutter is just where he ought to be. Nature is working away at him to get him out of the way, just as she sets up her processes of dissolution to remove whatever is a failure in its line. Gambling and less mentionable vices all cure themselves by the ruin and dissolution of their victims. Nine-

tenths of our measures for preventing vice are really protective towards it, because they ward off the penalty. "Ward off," I say, and that is the usual way of looking at it; but is the penalty really annihilated? By no means. It is turned into police and court expenses and spread over those who have resisted vice. It is the Forgotten Man again who has been subjected to the penalty while our minds were full of the drunkards, spendthrifts, gamblers, and other victims of dissipation. Who is, then, the Forgotten Man? He is the clean, quiet, virtuous, domestic citizen, who pays his debts and his taxes and is never heard of out of his little circle. Yet who is there in the society of a civilized state who deserves to be remembered and considered by the legislator and statesman before this man?

Another class of cases is closely connected with this last. There is an apparently invincible prejudice in people's minds in favor of state regulation. All experience is against state regulation and in favor of liberty. The freer the civil institutions are, the more weak or mischievous state regulation is. The Prussian bureaucracy can do a score of things for the citizen which no governmental organ in the United States can do; and, conversely, if we want to be taken care of as Prussians and Frenchmen are, we must give up something of our personal liberty.

Now we have a great many well-intentioned people among us who believe that they are serving their country when they discuss plans for regulating the relations of employer and employee, or the sanitary regulations of dwellings, or the construction of factories, or the way to behave on Sunday, or what people ought not to eat or drink or smoke. All this is harmless enough and well enough as a basis of mutual encouragement and missionary enterprise, but it is almost always made a basis of legislation. The reformers want to get a majority, that is, to get the power of the state and so to make other people do what the reformers think it right and wise to do. A and B agree to spend Sunday in a certain way. They get a law passed to make C pass it in their way. They determine to be teetotallers and they get a law passed to make C be a teetotaller for the sake of D who is likely to drink too much. Factory acts for women and children are right because women and children are not on an equal footing with men and cannot, therefore, make contracts properly. Adult men, in a free state, must be left to make their own contracts and defend



themselves. It will not do to say that some men are weak and unable to make contracts any better than women. Our civil institutions assume that all men are equal in political capacity and all are given equal measure of political power and right, which is not the case with women and children. If, then, we measure political rights by one theory and social responsibilities by another, we produce an immoral and vicious relation. A and B, however, get factory acts and other acts passed regulating the relation of employers and employees and set armies of commissioners and inspectors traveling about to see to things, instead of using their efforts, if any are needed, to lead the free men to make their own conditions as to what kind of factory buildings they will work in, how many hours they will work, what they will do on Sunday and so on. The consequence is that men lose the true education in freedom which is needed to support free institutions. They are taught to rely on government officers and inspectors. The whole system of government inspectors is corrupting to free institutions. In England, the liberals used always to regard state regulation with suspicion, but since they have come to power, they plainly believe that state regulation is a good thing—if *they* regulate—because, of course, they want to bring about good things. In this country each party takes turns, according as it is in or out, in supporting or denouncing the non-interference theory.

Now, if we have state regulation, what is always forgotten is this: Who pays for it? Who is the victim of it? There always is a victim. The workmen who do not defend themselves have to pay for the inspectors who defend them. The whole system of social regulation by boards, commissioners, and inspectors consists in relieving negligent people of the consequences of their negligence and so leaving them to continue negligent without correction. That system also turns away from the agencies which are close, direct, and germane to the purpose, and seeks others. Now, if you relieve negligent people of the consequences of their negligence, you can only throw those consequences on the people who have not been negligent. If you turn away from the agencies which are direct and cognate to the purpose, you can only employ other agencies. Here, then, you have your Forgotten Man again. The man who has been careful and prudent and who wants to go on and reap his advantages for himself and his children is arrested just at that point, and he is told that he must go and take

care of some negligent employees in a factory or on a railroad who have not provided precautions for themselves or have not forced their employers to provide precautions, or negligent tenants who have not taken care of their own sanitary arrangements, or negligent householders who have not provided against fire, or negligent parents who have not sent their children to school. If the Forgotten Man does not go, he must hire an inspector to go. No doubt it is often worth his while to go or send, rather than leave the thing undone, on account of his remoter interest; but what I want to show is that all this is unjust to the Forgotten Man, and that the reformers and philosophers miss the point entirely when they preach that it is his duty to do all this work. Let them preach to the negligent to learn to take care of themselves. Whenever A and B put their heads together and decide what A, B and C must do for D, there is never any pressure on A and B. They consent to it and like it. There is rarely any pressure on D because he does not like it and contrives to evade it. The pressure all comes on C. Now, who is C? He is always the man who, if let alone, would make a reasonable use of his liberty without abusing it. He would not constitute any social problem at all and would not need any regulation. He is the Forgotten Man again, and as soon as he is brought from his obscurity you see that he is just that one amongst us who is what we all ought to be.

Let us look at another case. I read again and again arguments to prove that criminals have claims and rights against society. Not long ago, I read an account of an expensive establishment for the reformation of criminals, and I am told that we ought to reform criminals, not merely punish them vindictively. When I was a young man, I read a great many novels by Eugene Sue, Victor Hugo, and other Frenchmen of the school of '48, in which the badness of a bad man is represented, not as his fault, but as the fault of society. Now, as society consists of the bad men plus the good men, and as the object of this declaration was to show that the badness of the bad men was not the fault of the bad men, it remains that the badness of the bad men must be the fault of the good men. No doubt, it is far more consoling to the bad men than even to their friends to reach the point of this demonstration.

Let us ask, now, for a moment, what is the sense of punishment, since a good many people seem to be quite in a muddle about it.

Every man in society is bound in nature and reason to contribute to the strength and welfare of society. He ought to work, to be peaceful, honest, just, and virtuous. A criminal is a man who, instead of working with and for society, turns his efforts against the common welfare in some way or other. He disturbs order, violates harmony, invades the security and happiness of others, wastes and destroys capital. If he is put to death, it is on the ground that he has forfeited all right to existence in society by the magnitude of his offenses against its welfare. If he is imprisoned, it is simply a judgment of society upon him that he is so mischievous to the society that he must be segregated from it. His punishment is a warning to him to reform himself, just exactly like the penalties inflicted by God and nature on vice. A man who has committed crime is, therefore, a burden on society and an injury to it. He is a destructive and not a productive force and everybody is worse off for his existence than if he did not exist. Whence, then, does he obtain a right to be taught or reformed at the public expense? The whole question of what to do with him is one of expediency, and it embraces the whole range of possible policies from that of execution to that of education and reformation, but when the expediency of reformatory attempts is discussed we always forget the labor and expense and who must pay. All that the state does for the criminal, beyond forcing him to earn his living, is done at the expense of the industrious member of society who never costs the state anything for correction and discipline. If a man who has gone astray can be reclaimed in any way, no one would hinder such a work, but people whose minds are full of sympathy and interest for criminals and who desire to adopt some systematic plans of reformatory efforts are only, once more, trampling on the Forgotten Man.

Let us look at another case. If there is a public office to be filled, of course a great number of persons come forward as candidates for it. Many of these persons are urged as candidates on the ground that they are badly off, or that they cannot support themselves, or that they want to earn a living while educating themselves, or that they have female relatives dependent on them, or for some other reason of a similar kind. In other cases, candidates are presented and urged on the ground of their kinship to somebody, or on account of service, it may be meritorious service, in some other line than that of the duty to be performed. Men are proposed for clerkships on the ground

of service in the army twenty years ago, or for customhouse inspectors on the ground of public services in the organization of political parties. If public positions are granted on these grounds of sentiment or favoritism, the abuse is to be condemned on the ground of the harm done to the public interest; but I now desire to point out another thing which is constantly forgotten. If you give a position to A, you cannot give it to B. If A is an object of sentiment or favoritism and not a person fit and competent to fulfill the duty, who is B? He is somebody who has nothing but merit on his side, somebody who has no powerful friends, no political influence, some quiet, unobtrusive individual who has known no other way to secure the chances of life than simply to deserve them. Here we have the Forgotten Man again, and once again we find him worthy of all respect and consideration, but passed by in favor of the noisy, pushing, and incompetent. Who ever remembers that if you give a place to a man who is unfit for it you are keeping out of it somebody, somewhere, who is fit for it?

Let us take another case. A trades-union is an association of journeymen in a certain trade which has for one of its chief objects to raise wages in that trade. This object can be accomplished only by drawing more capital into the trade, or by lessening the supply of labor in it. To do the latter, the trades-unions limit the number of apprentices who may be admitted to the trade. In discussing this device, people generally fix their minds on the beneficiaries of this arrangement. It is desired by everybody that wages should be as high as they can be under the conditions of industry. Our minds are directed by the facts of the case to the men who are in the trade already and are seeking their own advantage. Sometimes people go on to notice the effects of trades-unionism on the employers, but although employers are constantly vexed by it, it is seen that they soon count it into the risks of their business and settle down to it philosophically. Sometimes people go further then and see that, if the employer adds the trades-union and strike risk to the other risks, he submits to it because he has passed it along upon the public and that the public wealth is diminished by trades-unionism, which is undoubtedly the case. I do not remember, however, that I have ever seen in print any analysis and observation of trades-unionism which takes into account its effect in another direction. The effect on employers or on the pub-

lic would not raise wages. The public pays more for houses and goods, but that does not raise wages. The surplus paid by the public is pure loss, because it is only paid to cover an extra business risk of the employer. If their trades-unions raise wages, how do they do it? They do it by lessening the supply of labor in the trade, and this they do by limiting the number of apprentices. All that is won, therefore, for those in the trade, is won at the expense of those persons in the same class in life who want to get into the trade but are forbidden. Like every other monopoly, this one secures advantages for those who are in only at a greater loss to those who are kept out. Who, then, are those who are kept out and who are always forgotten in all the discussions? They are the Forgotten Men again; and what kind of men are they? They are those young men who want to earn their living by the trade in question. Since they select it, it is fair to suppose that they are fit for it, would succeed at it, and would benefit society by practicing it; but they are arbitrarily excluded from it and are perhaps pushed down into the class of unskilled laborers. When people talk of the success of a trades-union in raising wages, they forget these persons who have really, in a sense, paid the increase.

Let me now turn your attention to another class of cases. I have shown how, in time past, the history of states has been a history of selfishness, cupidity, and robbery, and I have affirmed that now and always the problems of government are how to deal with these same vices of human nature. People are always prone to believe that there is something metaphysical and sentimental about civil affairs, but there is not. Civil institutions are constructed to protect, either directly or indirectly, the property of men and the honor of women against the vices and passions of human nature. In our day and country, the problem presents new phases, but it is there just the same as it ever was, and the problem is only the more difficult for us because of its new phase which prevents us from recognizing it. In fact, our people are raving and struggling against it in a kind of blind way, not yet having come to recognize it. More than half of their blows, at present, are misdirected and fail of their object, but they will be aimed better by and by. There is a great deal of clamor about watering stocks and the power of combined capital, which is not very intelligent or well-directed. The evil and abuse which people are groping after in all these denunciations is jobbery.

By jobbery I mean the constantly apparent effort to win wealth, not by honest and independent production, but by some sort of a scheme for extorting other people's product from them. A large part of our legislation consists in making a job for somebody. Public buildings are jobs, not always, but in most cases. The buildings are not needed at all or are costly far beyond what is useful or even decently luxurious. Internal improvements are jobs. They are carried out, not because they are needed in themselves, but because they will serve the turn of some private interest, often incidentally that of the very legislators who pass the appropriations for them. A man who wants a farm, instead of going out where there is plenty of land available for it, goes down under the Mississippi River to make a farm, and then wants his fellow-citizens to be taxed to dyke the river so as to keep it off his farm. The Californian hydraulic miners have washed the gold out of the hillsides and have washed the dirt down into the valleys to the ruin of the rivers and the farms. They want the federal government to remove this dirt at the national expense. The silver miners, finding that their product is losing value in the market, get the government to go into the market as a great buyer in the hope of sustaining the price. The national government is called upon to buy or hire unsalable ships; to dig canals which will not pay; to educate illiterates in the states which have not done their duty at the expense of the states which have done their duty as to education; to buy up telegraphs which no longer pay; and to provide the capital for enterprises of which private individuals are to win the profits. We are called upon to squander twenty millions on swamps and creeks; from twenty to sixty-six millions on the Mississippi River; one hundred millions in pensions—and there is now a demand for another hundred million beyond that. This is the great plan of all living on each other. The pensions in England used to be given to aristocrats who had political power, in order to corrupt them. Here the pensions are given to the great democratic mass who have the political power, in order to corrupt them. We have one hundred thousand federal office-holders and I do not know how many state and municipal office-holders. Of course public officers are necessary and it is an economical organization of society to set apart some of its members for civil functions, but if the number of persons drawn from production and supported by the producers while engaged in civil functions is in un-

due proportion to the total population, there is economic loss. If public offices are treated as spoils or benefices or sinecures, then they are jobs and only constitute part of the pillage.

The biggest job of all is a protective tariff. This device consists in delivering every man over to be plundered by his neighbor and in teaching him to believe that it is a good thing for him and his country because he may take his turn at plundering the rest. Mr. Kelley said that if the internal revenue taxes on whisky and tobacco, which are paid to the United States government, were not taken off, there would be a rebellion. Just then it was discovered that Sumatra tobacco was being imported, and the Connecticut tobacco men hastened to Congress to get a tax laid on it for their advantage. So it appears that if a tax is laid on tobacco, to be paid to the United States, there will be a rebellion, but if a tax is laid on it to be paid to the farmers of the Connecticut Valley, there will be no rebellion at all. The tobacco farmers having been taxed for protected manufactures are now to be taken into the system, and the workmen in the factories are to be taxed on their tobacco to protect the farmers. So the system is rendered more complete and comprehensive.

On every hand you find this jobbery. The government is to give every man a pension, and every man an office, and every man a tax to raise the price of his product, and to clean out every man's creek for him, and to buy all his unsalable property, and to provide him with plenty of currency to pay his debts, and to educate his children, and to give him the use of a library and a park and a museum and a gallery of pictures. On every side the doors of waste and extravagance stand open; and spend, squander, plunder, and grab are the watchwords. We grumble some about it and talk about the greed of corporations and the power of capital and the wickedness of stock gambling. Yet we elect the legislators who do all this work. Of course, we should never think of blaming ourselves for electing men to represent and govern us, who, if I may use a slang expression, give us away. What man ever blamed himself for his misfortune? We groan about monopolies and talk about more laws to prevent the wrongs done by chartered corporations. Who made the charters? Our representatives. Who elected such representatives? We did. How can we get bad law-makers to make a law which shall prevent bad law-makers from making a bad law? That is, really, what we are trying to do. If we

are a free, self-governing people, all our misfortunes come right home to ourselves and we can blame nobody else. Is any one astonished to find that men are greedy, whether they are incorporated or not? Is it a revelation to find that we need, in our civil affairs, to devise guarantees against selfishness, rapacity, and fraud? I have ventured to affirm that government has never had to deal with anything else.

Now, I have said that this jobbery means waste, plunder, and loss, and I defined it at the outset as the system of making a chance to extort part of his product from somebody else. Now comes the question: Who pays for it all? The system of plundering each other soon destroys all that it deals with. It produces nothing. Wealth comes only from production, and all that the wrangling grabbers, loafers, and jobbers get to deal with comes from somebody's toil and sacrifice. Who, then, is he who provides it all? Go and find him and you will have once more before you the Forgotten Man. You will find him hard at work because he has a great many to support. Nature has done a great deal for him in giving him a fertile soil and an excellent climate and he wonders why it is that, after all, his scale of comfort is so moderate. He has to get out of the soil enough to pay all his taxes, and that means the cost of all the jobs and the fund for all the plunder. The Forgotten Man is delving away in patient industry, supporting his family, paying his taxes, casting his vote, supporting the church and the school, reading his newspaper, and cheering for the politician of his admiration, but he is the only one for whom there is no provision in the great scramble and the big divide.

Such is the Forgotten Man. He works, he votes, generally he prays—but he always pays—yes, above all, he pays. He does not want an office; his name never gets into the newspaper except when he gets married or dies. He keeps production going on. He contributes to the strength of parties. He is flattered before election. He is strongly patriotic. He is wanted, whenever, in his little circle, there is work to be done or counsel to be given. He may grumble some occasionally to his wife and family, but he does not frequent the grocery or talk politics at the tavern. Consequently, he is forgotten. He is a commonplace man. He gives no trouble. He excites no admiration. He is not in any way a hero (like a popular orator); or a problem (like tramps and outcasts); nor notorious (like criminals); nor an object of senti-



ment (like the poor and weak); nor a burden (like paupers and loafers); nor an object out of which social capital may be made (like the beneficiaries of church and state charities); nor an object for charitable aid and protection (like animals treated with cruelty); nor the object of a job (like the ignorant and illiterate); nor one over whom sentimental economists and statesmen can parade their fine sentiments (like inefficient workmen and shiftless artisans). Therefore, he is forgotten. All the burdens fall on him, or on her, for it is time to remember that the Forgotten Man is not seldom a woman.

When you go to Willimantic, they will show you with great pride the splendid thread mills there. I am told that there are sewing-women who can earn only fifty cents in twelve hours, and provide the thread. In the cost of every spool of thread more than one cent is tax. It is paid, not to get the thread, for you could get the thread without it. It is paid to get the Willimantic linen company which is not worth having and which is, in fact, a nuisance, because it makes thread harder to get than it would be if there were no such concern. If a woman earns fifty cents in twelve hours, she earns a spool of thread as nearly as may be in an hour, and if she uses a spool of thread per day, she works a quarter of an hour per day to support the Willimantic linen company, which in 1882 paid 95 per cent dividend to its stockholders. If you go and look at the mill, it will captivate your imagination until you remember all the women in all the garrets, and all the artisans' and laborers' wives and children who are spending their hours of labor, not to get goods which they need, but to pay for the industrial system which only stands in their way and makes it harder for them to get the goods.

It is plain enough that the Forgotten Man and the Forgotten Woman are the very life and substance of society. They are the ones who ought to be first and always remembered. They are always forgotten by sentimentalists, philanthropists, reformers, enthusiasts, and every description of speculator in sociology, political economy, or political science. If a student of any of these sciences ever comes to understand the position of the Forgotten Man and to appreciate his true value, you will find such student an uncompromising advocate of the strictest scientific thinking on all social topics, and a cold and hard-hearted skeptic toward all artificial schemes of social amelioration. If it is desired to bring about social improvements,

bring us a scheme for relieving the Forgotten Man of some of his burdens. He is our productive force which we are wasting. Let us stop wasting his force. Then we shall have a clean and simple gain for the whole society. The Forgotten Man is weighted down with the cost and burden of the schemes for making everybody happy, with the cost of public beneficence, with the support of all the loafers, with the loss of all the economic quackery, with the cost of all the jobs. Let us remember him a little while. Let us take some of the burdens off him. Let us turn our pity on him instead of on the good-for-nothing. It will be only justice to him, and society will greatly gain by it. Why should we not also have the satisfaction of thinking and caring for a little while about the clean, honest, industrious, independent, self-supporting men and women who have not inherited much to make life luxurious for them, but who are doing what they can to get on in the world without begging from anybody, especially since all they want is to be let alone, with good friendship and honest respect. Certainly the philanthropists and sentimentalists have kept our attention for a long time on the nasty, shiftless, criminal, whining, crawling, and good-for-nothing people, as if they alone deserved our attention.

The Forgotten Man is never a pauper. He almost always has a little capital because it belongs to the character of the man to save something. He never has more than a little. He is, therefore, poor in the popular sense, although in the correct sense he is not so. I have said already that if you learn to look for the Forgotten Man and to care for him, you will be very skeptical toward all philanthropic and humanitarian schemes. It is clear now that the interest of the Forgotten Man and the interest of "the poor," "the weak," and the other petted classes are in antagonism. In fact, the warning to you to look for the Forgotten Man comes the minute that the orator or writer begins to talk about the poor man. That minute the Forgotten Man is in danger of a new assault, and if you intend to meddle in the matter at all, then is the minute for you to look about for him and to give him your aid. Hence, if you care for the Forgotten Man, you will be sure to be charged with *not* caring for the poor. Whatever you do for any of the petted classes wastes capital. If you do anything for the Forgotten Man, you must secure him his earnings and savings, that is, you legislate for the security of capital and for its free em-

ployment; you must oppose paper money, wildcat banking and usury laws and you must maintain the inviolability of contracts. Hence you must be prepared to be told that you favor the capitalist class, the enemy of the poor man.

What the Forgotten Man really wants is true liberty. Most of his wrongs and woes come from the fact that there are yet mixed together in our institutions the old mediæval theories of protection and personal dependence and the modern theories of independence and individual liberty. The consequence is that the people who are clever enough to get into positions of control, measure their own rights by the paternal theory and their own duties by the theory of independent liberty. It follows that the Forgotten Man, who is hard at work at home, has to pay both ways. His rights are measured by the theory of liberty, that is, he has only such as he can conquer. His duties are measured by the paternal theory, that is, he must discharge all which are laid upon him, as is always the fortune of parents. People talk about the paternal theory of government as if it were a very simple thing. Analyze it, however, and you see that in every paternal relation there must be two parties, a parent and a child, and when you speak metaphorically, it makes all the difference in the world who is parent and who is child. Now, since we, the people, are the state, whenever there is any work to be done or expense to be paid, and since the petted classes and the criminals and the jobbers cost and do not pay, it is they who are in the position of the child, and it is the Forgotten Man who is the parent. What the Forgotten Man needs, therefore, is that we come to a clearer understanding of liberty and to a more complete realization of it. Every step which we win in liberty will set the Forgotten Man free from some of his burdens and allow him to use his powers for himself and for the commonwealth.

## A PARABLE<sup>1</sup>

A CERTAIN respectable man had three sons, who grew up, lived, and died in the same city.

The oldest one turned his back at an early age on study. Being eager to earn something at once, he obtained employment driving a grocer's delivery wagon. He never acquired a trade, but was a teamster or driver all his life. In his youth he spent all his spare time with idle companions and devoted his earnings to beer, tobacco, and amusement. At twenty-two he fell in love and married. He had six children who scrambled part way through the public grammar school after a negligent fashion, but cost as much money and more of the teachers' time than if they had been regular and studious. This son never earned over two dollars a day except on election day, when he earned five or more, according to circumstances. He never had ten dollars in his possession over and above his debts.

The second son was the scholar of the family. By energy, perseverance, and self-denial he managed to get a professional education. He married at thirty, being in the receipt of an adequate income from his profession, but not yet having accumulated any capital. He had three children who were all educated in the public grammar and high schools, and his son went to the university, which was a state institution supported by taxation. His wife had strong social ambition, and, although he had early trained himself in habits of frugality and prudence, he found himself forced to enlarge his expenditures quite as rapidly as his income increased; so that, although he earned at last several thousand dollars a year, he left no property when he died.

The third son had no taste for professional study, but he had good sense and industry. He was apprenticed to a carpenter. He spent his leisure time in reading and formed no expensive habits. As soon as he began to receive wages he began to save. On account of his care, diligence, and good behavior, he was made an underforeman. The highest earnings he ever obtained were \$1,500 per year. At thirty years of age he had saved \$2,000. He then married. He invested his savings in a homestead, but was obliged to incur a debt

1. Written in the 1880's.

which it took him years of patient struggle to pay. He had three children who went through the public grammar school, but he was not able to support them through the high school and college. When he died he left the homestead clear of debt and nothing more.

The oldest son never paid a cent of local or direct tax in his life. The second son never paid any. The third paid taxes from the time he was twenty-two, when he first began to save, and while the mortgage rested on his homestead, he paid taxes on his debt as well as on his property. The taxes which he paid went to pay for police, lights, sewers, public schools, public charity, state university, public prison, public park, and public library, and also for soldiers' monuments, public celebrations, and all forms of occasional public expenditure. His brothers and his brothers' children all enjoyed these things as much as, or, as we have seen, more than he and his children.

The oldest brother borrowed constantly of the two others, and he and his children availed themselves freely of the privileges of relationship. Inasmuch as the second brother, in spite of his large income, was constantly in pecuniary straits, it was the youngest who was the largest creditor of the oldest. The oldest was an earnest greenbacker with socialistic tendencies, and the only payment he ever made to the youngest was in the way of lectures on the crimes of capital, the meanness of capitalists, and the equality of all men. The oldest died first. Two of his children were still small and the older ones were a cause of anxiety to their relatives on account of careless habits and unformed character. The second son, or to be more accurate, his wife, would not, for social reasons, take charge of the orphans, and they fell to the care of the youngest brother, although the second, while he lived, contributed to their maintenance.

The neighbors differed greatly in their views of this family. Some called the oldest poor and the other two rich. Some called the two oldest poor and the other rich. Some called the oldest and youngest poor and the second rich. As the facts were all known throughout the neighborhood, it was found to be a very interesting and inexhaustible subject of debate. Some people compared the first and second and moralized on the inequality of the distribution of wealth—one living in poverty and the other in luxury. This state of things was generally regarded as very "unjust" to the oldest brother. He was fond of

demonstrating that it was so to anyone who would listen. Nobody ever was known to refer to the youngest brother as the victim of any injustice. The oldest brother was liked and pitied by everybody. The second was very popular in his circle. The third was not very well known and was not popular with anybody.

COMMENT BY  
*BRUCE BARTON*

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT appropriated the phrase, the Forgotten Man, and distorted it. The Forgotten Man to whom Professor Sumner referred was not the man at the bottom of the social structure, the man "ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed." This bottom man, says Professor Sumner, is far from forgotten. On the contrary, he "who has done nothing to raise himself above poverty finds that the social doctors flock around him, bringing the capital which they have collected from the other class, and promising him the aid of the state to give him what the other has worked for."

The real Forgotten Men for whom Professor Sumner felt sorry were the middle-class citizens. Politically these Forgotten Men do not amount to much. They are not organized; they have no spokesman, no champion, no power to punish their enemies or reward their friends.

In Congress we hear plenty about labor, the veterans, the farmers, and the unemployed. We never hear anything about the real Forgotten Men. There are only a few more than three million of them who pay income taxes anyway, and we know that while they will squawk they will not do anything. They go right along foolishly dividing themselves between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. They never have learned, as the pressure groups have learned, to vote for the candidates who will give them a break.

Any government which bases its policies and program on burdening the middle class, and assumes that in so doing it is working no hardship on the poor, is economically illiterate. Destroy the middle class, and you begin the destruction of democracy. Break the back of

the middle class, and you cannot possibly raise enough money by taxation to carry the higher burden of relief. Without a prosperous middle class there is no security for anybody.

## COMMENT BY

## MARK SULLIVAN

[Instead of commenting on one of Sumner's essays, Mr. Sullivan preferred to make the following statement. Since it refers to another misuse of terms coined by Sumner, like the Forgotten Man, it is placed here.—*Ed.*]

**A**BOUT the time this book of Sumner's Essays was being prepared, in the early part of 1940, the phrase "folkways and mores" was coming into renewed use, in a narrow circle. Renewed use, but use in a new sense. The phrase had long been familiar to persons having especial interest in Sumner, and in a more limited way to scholars generally. But it was never in wide popular use, and even among the sophisticated it had been more or less confined to use in connection with its author. The two words, "folkways" and "mores," were not in the dictionary—at least they were not in the 1929 edition of Webster's which I consulted in May, 1940.<sup>1</sup>

Now, however, during the 1930's, the phrase became almost a part of the technical terminology of a group of intellectuals who were in, or on the fringes of, a movement called the "New Deal." As they used the term, they put upon it a faint tinge of derision. "Folkways and mores" was anything old, accustomed, any familiar institution or practice; and to the New Dealers, all that was old was under suspicion, was required to defend itself.

An example of the New Dealers' use of the phrase was in a speech delivered at Boston in February, 1940, by a contemporary candidate

1. Both words appear in the 1939 edition, as follows:

"*folkway*. Any way of thinking, feeling, behaving, or achieving an end, common to members of a social group; a social habit or culture pattern. *W. G. Sumner*."

"*mores*. Customs; specif., fixed customs or folkways imbued with an ethical significance; customs or conventions which have the force of law; manners."

—*Ed.*

for the Democratic Presidential nomination, Federal Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt. Mr. McNutt was speaking of the fiscal record of the New Deal National Administration, its doubling of the national debt in seven successive years of unbalanced budgets. Mr. McNutt's attitude toward this was somewhere between apology and praise—it was hard to determine which. He was in a position calling for delicate tact. He himself, a few years before, as governor of Indiana, had orthodoxly balanced the state budget, and had claimed this to be a laudable achievement, a very diamond in the crown of his public record, entitling him to further public preferment. Now, however, he was a member of the New Deal National Administration, and a candidate for the privilege of carrying it through another four years. In this role, he had to step warily. In order to put upon budget balancing the demeanment of that which is rather old-fashioned, he called it "folkways and mores":

"To incur further debts and carry an unbalanced national budget year after year, in the face of economic folkways and mores acquired over the centuries, demands both courage and vision."

For a nation to avoid debt, to live within its means, was, to the New Dealers, just a folkway; to depart from it was "courage and vision." Everything that was long accepted and well established, and which they wanted to change, usually to reverse, was called by the same term. Thrift, saving, was just a folkway. The system of private ownership, of business carried on for profit, was just a folkway. Some other way would be equally good. All the New Dealers needed, so they felt, was to introduce the new way and get the public accustomed to it.

In the process of innovation, an essential requisite was to create disrespect for the old, to put upon it a faint opprobrium; and one way to accomplish this was to speak of the old as mere "folkways and mores." They used Sumner's ancient phrase as having much the same meaning as another phrase which the New Dealers used for the same purpose of derogation, "horse and buggy."

Just as, in their processes of innovation, they gave a changed meaning, and especially a changed atmosphere, to Sumner's phrase and to many other terms, so did they, as part of their technique, invent wholly new terms for old practices. The formerly disapproved practice of government spending became, under the New Deal leger-



demain with words, "government investing," which they presented as something worthy. In the collection of the funds for social security, the word "tax" was changed by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau to "contribution."

The effort of the New Deal, in a wide area of public affairs, was to put opprobrium upon the old, upon venerated "folkways and mores." It is therefore useful to restore the phrase in the meaning which Sumner gave it, and to make a new generation familiar with the clear thinking of one of America's great economists.

## *THE INFLUENCE OF COMMERCIAL CRISES ON OPINIONS ABOUT ECO- NOMIC DOCTRINES<sup>1</sup>*

**A**NYONE who follows the current literature about economic subjects will perceive that it is so full of contradictions as to create a doubt whether there are any economic laws, or whether, if there are any, we know anything about them. No body of men ever succeeded in molding the opinions of others by wrangling with each other, and that is the present attitude in which the economists present themselves before the public. Like other people who engage in wrangling, the economists have also allowed their method to degenerate from argument to abuse, contempt, and sneering disparagement of each other. The more superficial and self-sufficient the opinions and behavior of the disputants, the more absolutely they abandon sober arguments and devote themselves to the method I have described. As I have little taste for this kind of discussion and believe that it only degrades the science of which I am a student, I have taken no part in it. In answer to your invitation, now, what I propose to do is to call your attention to some features of the economic situation of civilized nations at the present time with a view to establish two points:

1. To explain the vacillation and feebleness of opinions about economic doctrine which mark the present time, and
2. To show the necessity, just at this time, of calm and sober apprehension of sound doctrine in political economy.

At the outset let me ask you to notice the effects which have been produced during the last century by the developments of science and of the industrial arts. Formerly, industry was pursued on a small scale, with little or no organization. Markets were limited to small districts, and commerce was confined to raw materials and colonial products. Producer and consumer met face to face. The conditions of the market were open to personal inspection. The relations of supply and demand were matters of personal experience. Production was

1. An address before The Free Trade Club, New York City, May 15, 1879.

carried on for orders only in many branches of industry, so that supply and demand were fitted to one another, as we may say, physically. Disproportionate production was, therefore, prevented and the necessity of redistributing productive effort was made plain by the most direct personal experience. Under such a state of things, much time must elapse between the formation of a wish and its realization.

Within a century very many and various forces have been at work to produce an entire change in this system of industry. The invention of the steam engine and of the machines used in the textile fabrics produced the factory system, with a high organization of industry, concentrated at certain centers. The opening of canals and the improvement of highways made possible the commerce by which the products were distributed. The cheapening of printing and the multiplication of means of advertising widened the market by concentrating the demand which was widely dispersed in place, until now the market is the civilized world. The applications of steam power to roads and ships only extended further the same development, and the telegraph has only cheapened and accelerated the means of communicating information to the same end.

What have been the effects on industry?

1. The whole industry and commerce of the world have been built up into a great system in which organization has become essential and in which it has been carried forward and is being carried forward every day to new developments. Industry has been growing more and more impersonal as far as the parties to it are concerned. Our wants are satisfied instantaneously and regularly by the coöperation of thousands of people all over the world whom we have never seen or heard of; and we earn our living daily by contributing to satisfy the wants of thousands scattered all over the world, of whom we know nothing personally. In the place of actual contact and acquaintance with the persons who are parties to the transactions, we now depend upon the regularity, under the conditions of earthly life, of human wants and human efforts. The system of industry is built upon the constancy of certain conditions of human existence, upon the certainty of the economic forces which thence arise, and upon the fact that those forces act with perfect regularity under changeless laws. If we but reflect a moment, we shall see that modern industry and commerce could not go on for a day if we were not dealing here

with forces and laws which may properly be called natural because they come into action when the conditions are fulfilled, because the conditions cannot but exist if there is a society of human beings collected anywhere on earth, and because, when the forces come into action, they work themselves out, according to their laws, without possible escape from their effects. We can divert the forces from one course to another; we can change their form; we can make them expend themselves upon one person or interest instead of upon another. We do this all the time, by bad legislation, by prejudice, habit, fashion, erroneous notions of equity, happiness, the highest good, and so on; but we never destroy an economic force any more than we destroy a physical force.

2. Of course it follows that success in the production of wealth under this modern system depends primarily on the correctness with which men learn the character of economic forces and of the laws under which those forces act. This is the field of the science of political economy, and it is the reason why it is a science. It investigates the laws of forces which are natural, not arbitrary, artificial, or conventional. Some communities have developed a great hatred for persons who held different religious opinions from themselves. Such a feeling would be a great social force, but it would be arbitrary and artificial. Many communities have held that all labor, not mental, was slavish and degrading. This notion, too, was conventional, but it was a great social force where it existed. Such notions, either past or present, are worth studying for historical interest and instruction, but they do not afford the basis for a science whose object is to find out what is true in regard to the relations of man to the world in which he lives. The study of them throws a valuable sidelight on the true relations of human life, just as the study of error always throws a sidelight upon the truth, but they have no similarity to the law that men want the maximum of satisfaction for the minimum of effort, or to the law of the diminishing return from land, or to the law of population, or to the law of supply and demand. Nothing can be gained, therefore, by mixing up history and science, valuable as one is to the other. If men try to carry on any operation without an intelligent theory of the forces with which they are dealing, they inevitably become the victims of the operation, not its masters. Hence they always do try to form some theory of the forces in question and to plan the

means to the end accordingly. The forces of nature go on and are true only to themselves. They never swerve out of pity for innocent error or well-intentioned mistakes. This is as true of economic forces as of any others. What is meant by a good or a bad investment, except that one is based on a correct judgment of forces and the other on incorrect judgment? How would sagacity, care, good judgment, and prudence meet their reward if the economic forces swerved out of pity for error? We know that there is no such thing in the order of nature.

I repeat, then, that the modern industrial and commercial system, dealing as it does with vast movements which no one mind can follow or compass in their ramifications and which are kept in harmony by natural laws, demands steadily advancing, clear, and precise knowledge of economic laws; that this knowledge must banish prejudices and traditions; that it must conquer baseless enthusiasms and whimsical hopes. If it does not accomplish this, we can expect but one result—that men will chase all sorts of phantoms and impossible hopes; that they will waste their efforts upon schemes which can only bring loss; and that some will run one way and some another until society loses all coherence, all unanimity of judgment as to what is to be sought and how to attain to it. The destruction of capital is only the least of the evils to be apprehended in such a case. I do not believe that we begin to appreciate one effect of the new civilization of the nineteenth century, *viz.*, that the civilized world of to-day is a unit, that it must move as a whole, that with the means we have devised of a common consent in regard to the ends of human life and the means of attaining them has come also the *necessity* that we should move onward in civilization by a common consent. The barriers of race, religion, language, and nationality are melting away under the operation of the same forces which have to such an extent annihilated the obstacles of distance and time. Civilization is constantly becoming more uniform. The conquests of some become at once the possession of all. It follows that our scientific knowledge of the laws which govern the life of men in society must keep pace with this development or we shall find our social tasks grow faster than our knowledge of social science, and our society will break to pieces under the burden. How, then, is this scientific knowledge to grow? Certainly not without controversy, but certainly also not without coherent, steady,

and persistent effort, proceeding on the lines already cut, breaking new ground when possible, correcting old errors when necessary.

3. It is another feature of the modern industrial system that, like every high organization, it requires men of suitable ability and skill at its head. The qualities which are required for a great banker, merchant, or manufacturer are as rare as any other great gifts among men, and the qualities demanded, or the degree in which they are demanded, are increasing every day with the expansion of the modern industrial system. The qualities required are those of the practical man, properly so called: sagacity, good judgment, prudence, boldness, and energy. The training, both scientific and practical, which is required for a great master of industry is wide and various. The great movements of industry, like all other great movements, present subordinate phenomena which are apparently opposed to, or inconsistent with their great tendencies and their general character. These phenomena, being smaller in scope, more directly subject to observation and therefore apparently more distinct and positive, are well calculated to mislead the judgment, either of the practical man or of the scientific student. In nothing, therefore, does the well-trained man distinguish himself from the ill-trained man more than in the balance of judgment by which he puts phenomena in their true relative position and refuses to be led astray by what is incidental or subsidiary. If, now, the question is asked, whether we have produced a class of highly trained men, competent to organize labor, transportation, commerce, and banking, on the scale required by the modern system, as rapidly as the need for them has increased, I believe no one will answer in the affirmative.

4. Another observation to which we are led upon noticing the character of the modern industrial system is that any errors or follies committed in one portion of it will produce effects which will ramify through the whole system. We have here an industrial organism, not a mere mechanical combination, and any disturbance in one part of it will derange or vitiate, more or less, the whole. The phenomena which here appear belong to what has been called fructifying causation. One economic error produces fruits which combine with those of another economic error, and the product of the two is not their sum, nor even their simple product, but the evil may be raised to a very high power by the combination. If a number of errors fall

together the mischief is increased accordingly. Currency and tariff errors constantly react upon each other, and multiply and develop each other in this way. Furthermore, the errors of one nation will be felt in other nations through the relations of commerce and credit which are now so close. There is no limit to the interest which civilized nations have in each other's economic and political wisdom, for they all bear the consequences of each other's follies. Hence when we have to deal with that form of economic disease which we call a commercial crisis, we may trace its origin to special errors in one country and in another, and may trace out the actions and reactions by which the effects have been communicated from one to another until shared by all; but no philosophy of a great commercial crisis is adequate nowadays unless it embraces in its scope the whole civilized world. A commercial crisis is a disturbance in the harmonious operation of the parts of the industrial organism. During economic health, the system moves smoothly and harmoniously, expanding continually, and its health and vigor are denoted by its growth, that is, by the accumulation of capital, which stimulates in its turn the hope, energy, and enterprise of men. Industrial disease is produced by disproportionate production, a wrong distribution of labor, erroneous judgment in enterprise, or miscalculations of force. These all have the same effect, *viz.*, to waste and destroy capital. Such causes disturb, in a greater or less degree, the harmonious working of the system, which depends upon the regular and exact fulfillment of the expectations which have been based on coöperative effort throughout the whole industrial body. The disturbance may be slight and temporary, or it may be very serious. In the latter case it will be necessary to arrest the movement of the whole system and to proceed to a general liquidation, before starting again. Such was the case from 1837 to 1842, and such has been the case for the last five years. It is needless to add that this arrest and liquidation cannot be accomplished without distress and loss to great number of innocent persons, and great positive loss of capital, to say nothing of what might have been won during the same period but must be foregone.

The financial organization is the medium by which the various parts of the industrial and commercial organism are held in harmony. It is by the financial organization that capital is collected and distributed, that the friction of exchanges is reduced to a minimum,

and that time is economized, through credit, between production and consumption. The financial system furnishes three indicators—prices, the rate of discount, and the foreign exchanges—through which we may read the operation of economic forces now that their magnitude makes it impossible to inspect them directly. Hence the great mischief of usury laws which tamper with the rate of discount, and of fluctuating currencies which falsify prices and the foreign exchanges. They destroy the value of the indicators, and have the same effect as tampering with the scales of a chemist or the steam-gauge of a locomotive.

In the matter of prices we have another difficulty to contend with, which is inevitable in the nature of things. We must choose some commodity to be the denominator of value. We can find no commodity which is not itself subject to fluctuation in its ratio of exchange with other things. Great crises have been caused in past times by fluctuations in the value of the commodities chosen as money, and such an element is, no doubt, at hand in the present crisis, although it had nothing to do with bringing it about. It follows that any improvement in the world's money is worth any sacrifice which it can possibly cost, if it tends to secure a more simple, exact, and unchanging standard of value.

The next point of which I wish to speak is easily introduced by the last remark; that point is the cost of all improvement. The human race has made no step whatever in civilization which has not been won by pain and distress. It wins no steps now without paying for them in sacrifices. To notice only things which are directly pertinent to our present purpose: every service which we win from nature displaces the acquired skill of the men who formerly performed the service; every such step is a gain to the race, but it imposes on some men the necessity of finding new means of livelihood, and if those men are advanced in life, this necessity may be harsh in the extreme. Every new machine, although it saves labor, and because it saves labor, serves the human race, yet destroys a vested interest of some laborers in the work which it performs. It imposes on them the necessity of turning to a new occupation, and this is hardly ever possible without a period of distress. It very probably throws them down from the rank of skilled to that of unskilled labor. Every new machine also destroys capital. It makes useless the half-worn-out machines which it super-



sedes. So canals caused capital which was invested in turnpikes and stage-coaches to depreciate, and so railroads have caused the capital invested in canals and other forms to depreciate. I see no exception to the rule that the progress won by the race is always won at the expense of some group of its members.

Anyone who will look back upon the last twenty-five years cannot fail to notice that the changes, advances, and improvements have been numerous and various. We are accustomed to congratulate each other upon them. There can be no doubt that they must and will contribute to the welfare of the human race beyond what any one can now possibly foresee or measure. I am firmly convinced, for my opinion, that the conditions of wealth and civilization for the next quarter of a century are provided for in excess of any previous period of history, and that nothing but human folly can prevent a period of prosperity which we, even now, should regard as fabulous. We can throw it away if we are too timid, if we become frightened at the rate of our own speed, or if we mistake the phenomena of a new era for the approach of calamity, or if the nations turn back to mediæval darkness and isolation, or if we elevate the follies and ignorances of the past into elements of economic truth, or if, instead of pursuing liberty with full faith and hope, the civilized world becomes the arena of a great war of classes in which all civilization must be destroyed. But, such follies apart, the conditions of prosperity are all provided.

We must notice, however, that these innovations have fallen with great rapidity upon a vast range of industries, that they have accumulated their effects, that they have suddenly altered the currents of trade and the methods of industry, and that we have hardly learned to accommodate ourselves to one new set of circumstances before a newer change or modification has been imposed. Some inventions, of which the Bessemer steel is the most remarkable example, have revolutionized industries. Some new channels of commerce have been opened which have changed the character and methods of very important branches of commerce. We have also seen a movement of several nations to secure a gold currency, which movement fell in with a large if not extraordinary production of silver and altered the comparative demand and supply of the two metals at the same time. This movement had nothing arbitrary about it, but proceeded from sound

motives and reasons in the interest of the nations which took this step. There is here no ground for condemnation or approval. Such action by sovereign nations is taken under liberty and responsibility to themselves alone, and if it is taken on a sufficiently large scale to form an event of importance to the civilized world, it must be regarded as a step in civilization. It can only be criticized by history. For the present, it is to be accepted and interpreted only as an indication that there are reasons and motives of self-interest which can lead a large part of the civilized world to this step at this time.

The last twenty-five years have also included political events which have had great effects on industry. Our Civil War caused an immense destruction of capital and left a large territory with millions of inhabitants almost entirely ruined in its industry, and with its labor system exposed to the necessity of an entire re-formation. Part of the expenditures and losses of the war were postponed and distributed by means of the paper currency which, instead of imposing industry and economy to restore the losses and waste, created the foolish belief that we could make war and get rich by it. The patriotic willingness of the nation to be taxed was abused to impose taxes for protection, not for revenue, so that the industry of the country was distorted and forced into unnatural development. The collapse of 1873, followed by a fall in prices and a general liquidation, was due to the fact that everyone knew in his heart that the state of things which had existed for some years before was hollow and fictitious. Confidence failed because everyone knew that there were no real grounds for confidence. The Franco-Prussian war had, also, while it lasted, produced a period of false and feverish prosperity in England. It was succeeded by great political changes in Germany which, together with the war indemnity, led to a sudden and unfounded expansion of speculation, amounting to a mania. Germany undoubtedly stands face to face with a new political and industrial future, but she has postponed it by a headlong effort to realize it at once. In France, too, the war was followed by a hasty, and, as we are told, unwise extension of permanent capital, planned to meet the extraordinary demand of an empty market. In England the prosperity of 1870-1872 has been followed as usual by developments of unsound credit, bad banking, and needless investments in worthless securities.

Here then we have, in a brief and inadequate statement, circum-

stances in all these great industrial nations peculiar to each, yet certainly sufficient to account for a period of reaction and distress. We have also before us great features of change in the world's industry and commerce which must ultimately produce immeasurable advantages, but which may well, operating with local causes, produce temporary difficulty; and we have to notice also that the local causes react through the commercial and credit relations of nations to distribute the evil.

It is not surprising, under such a state of things, that some people should lose their heads and begin to doubt the economic doctrines which have been most thoroughly established. It belongs to the symptoms of disease to lose confidence in the laws of health and to have recourse to quack remedies. I have already observed that certain phenomena appear in every great social movement which are calculated to deceive by apparent inconsistency or divergence. Hence we have seen the economists, instead of holding together and sustaining, at the time when it was most needed, both the scientific authority and the positive truth of their doctrines, break up and run hither and thither, some of them running away altogether. Many of them seem to be terrified to find that distress and misery still remain on earth and promise to remain as long as the vices of human nature remain. Many of them are frightened at liberty, especially under the form of competition, which they elevate into a bugbear. They think that it bears harshly on the weak. They do not perceive that here "the strong" and "the weak" are terms which admit of no definition unless they are made equivalent to the industrious and the idle, the frugal and the extravagant. They do not perceive, furthermore, that if we do not like the survival of the fittest, we have only one possible alternative, and that is the survival of the unfittest. The former is the law of civilization; the latter is the law of anticivilization. We have our choice between the two, or we can go on, as in the past, vacillating between the two, but a third plan—the socialist desideratum—a plan for nourishing the unfittest and yet advancing in civilization, no man will ever find. Some of the crude notions, however, which have been put forward surpass what might reasonably have been expected. These have attached themselves to branches of the subject which it is worth while to notice.

1. As the change in the relative value of the precious metals is by

far the most difficult and most important of the features of this period, it is quite what we might have expected that the ill-trained and dilettante writers should have pounced upon it as their special prey. The dabblers in philology never attempt anything less than the problem of the origin of language. Every teacher knows that he has to guard his most enthusiastic pupils against precipitate attempts to solve the most abstruse difficulties of the science. The change in the value of the precious metals which is going on will no doubt figure in history as one of the most important events in the economic history of this century. It will undoubtedly cost much inconvenience and loss to those who are in the way of it, or who get in the way of it. It will, when the currency changes connected with it are accomplished, prove a great gain to the whole commercial world. The nations which make the change do so because it is important for their interests to do it. Now, suppose that it were possible for those who are frightened at the immediate and temporary inconveniences, to arrest the movement—the only consequence would be that they would arrest and delay the inevitable march of improvement in the industrial system.

2. The second field, which is an especial favorite with the class of writers which I have described, is that of prognostications as to what developments of the economic system lie in the future. Probably every one has notions about this and every one who has to conduct business or make investments is forced to form judgments about it. There is hardly a field of economic speculation, however, which is more barren.

3. The third field into which these writers venture by preference is that of remedies for existing troubles. The popular tide of medicine is always therapeutics, and the less one knows of anatomy and physiology the more sure he is to address himself exclusively to this department, and to rely upon empirical remedies. The same procedure is followed in social science, and it is accompanied by the same contempt for scientific doctrine and knowledge and remedies. To bring out the points which here seem to me important, it will be necessary to go back for a moment to some facts which I have already described.

One of the chief characteristics of the great improvements in industry, which have been described, is that they bring about new distributions of population. If machinery displaces laborers engaged in manufactures, these laborers are driven to small shopkeeping, if they

have a little capital ; or to agricultural labor, if they have no capital. Improvements in commerce will destroy a local industry and force the laborers to find a new industry or to change their abode. When forces of this character coöperate on a grand scale, they may and do produce very important redistributions of population. In like manner legislation may, as tariff legislation does, draw population to certain places, and its repeal may force them to unwelcome change. We may state the fact in this way: let us suppose that, in 1850, out of every hundred laborers in the population, the economical distribution was such that fifty should be engaged in agriculture, thirty in manufacturing, and the other twenty in other pursuits. That is to say that, with the machinery and appliances then available, thirty manufacturing laborers could use the raw materials and food produced by fifty agricultural laborers so as to occupy all to the highest advantage. Now suppose that, by improvements in the arts, twenty men could, in 1880, use to the best advantage the raw materials and food produced by sixty in agriculture. It is evident that a redistribution would be necessary by which ten should be turned from manufacturing to land. That such a change has been produced within the last thirty years and that it has reached a point at which is setting in the counter movement to the former tendency from the land to the cities and towns, seems to me certain. There are even indications of great changes going on in the matter of distribution which will correct the loss and waste involved in the old methods of distribution long before any of the fancy plans for correcting them can be realized, and which are setting free both labor and capital in that department. Now if we can economize labor and capital in manufacturing, transportation, and distribution, and turn this labor and capital back upon the soil, we must vastly increase wealth, for that movement would enlarge the stream of wealth from its very source.

Right here, however, we need to make two observations.

1. The modern industrial system which I have described, with its high organization and fine division of labor, has one great drawback. The men, or groups of men, are dissevered from one another, their interests are often antagonistic, and the changes which occur take the form of conflicts of interest. I mean this: if a shoemaker worked alone, using a small capital of his own in tools and stock, and working for orders, he would have directly before him the facts of the

market. He would find out without effort or reflection when "trade fell off," when there was risk of not replacing his capital, when the course of fashion or competition called upon him to find other occupation, and so on. When a journeyman shoemaker works for wages, he pays no heed to these things. The employer, feeling them, has no recourse but to lower wages. It is by this measure that, under the higher organization, the need of new energy, or of a change of industry, or of a change of place is brought home to the workman. To him, however, it seems an arbitrary and cruel act of the master. Hence follow trade wars and strikes as an especial phenomenon of the modern system. It is just because it is a system, or more properly still, an organism, that the readjustments which are necessary from time to time in order to keep its parts in harmonious activity, and to keep it in harmony with physical surroundings, are brought about through this play of the parts on each other.

2. A general movement of labor and capital towards land, throughout the civilized world, means a great migration towards the new countries. This does not by any means imply the abandonment or decay of older countries, as some have seemed to believe. On the contrary, it means new prosperity for them. When I read that the United States are about to feed the world, not only with wheat and provisions, but with meat also, that they are to furnish coal and iron to mankind, that they are to displace all the older countries as exporters of manufactures, that they are to furnish the world's supply of the precious metals, and I know not what all besides, I am forced to ask what is the rest of the world going to do for us? What are they to give us besides tea, coffee, and sugar? Not ships, for we will not take them and are ambitious to carry away all our products ourselves. Certainly this is the most remarkable absurdity into which we have been led by forgetting that trade is an exchange. Neither can any one well expect that all mankind are to come and live here. The conditions of a large migration do, however, seem to exist. A migration of population is still a very unpopular idea in all the older states. The prejudice against it is apparent amongst Liberals and Tories, economists and sentimentalists. There is, however, a condition which is always suppressed in stating the social problem as it presents itself in hard times. That problem, as stated, is: "How are the population to find means of support?" and the suppressed condition

is: "if they insist on staying and seeking support where they are and in pursuits to which they are accustomed." The hardships of change are not for one moment to be denied, but nothing is gained by sitting down to whine about them. The sentimental reasons for clinging to one's birthplace may be allowed full weight, but they cannot be allowed to counterbalance important advantages. I do not see that any but land owners are interested to hold population in certain places, unless possibly we add governing classes and those who want military power. When I read declamations about nationality and the importance of national divisions to political economy (observe that I do not say to political science), I never can find any sense in them, and I am very sure that the writers never put any sense into them.

We may now return to consider the remedies proposed for hard times. We shall see that although they are quack remedies, and although they set at defiance all the economic doctrines which have been so laboriously established during the last century, they are fitted to meet the difficulty as it presents itself to land owners, governments, military powers, socialists, and sentimentalists. The tendency is towards an industrial system controlled by a natural coöperation far grander than anybody has ever planned, towards a community of interest and welfare far more beneficent than any universal republic or fraternity of labor which the Internationalists hope for, and towards a free and peaceful rivalry amongst nations in the arts of civilization. It is necessary to stop this tendency. What are the means proposed?

1. The first is to put a limit to civil liberty. By civil liberty (for I feel at once the need of defining this much-abused word) I mean the status which is created for an individual by those institutions which guarantee him the use of his own powers for his own development. For three or four centuries now, the civilized world has been struggling towards the realization of this civil liberty. Progress towards it has been hindered by the notion that liberty was some vague abstraction, or an emancipation from some of the hard conditions of human life, from which men never can be emancipated while they live on this earth. Civil liberty has also been confused with political activity or share in civil government. Political activity itself, however, is only a means to an end, and is valuable because it is necessary to se-

cure to the individual free exercise of his powers to produce and exchange according to his own choice and his own conception of happiness, and to secure him also that the products of his labor shall be applied to his satisfaction and not to that of any others. When we come to understand civil liberty for what it is, we shall probably go forward to realize it more completely. It will then appear that it begins and ends with freedom of production, freedom of exchange, and security of property. It will then appear also that governments depart from their prime and essential function when they undertake to transfer property instead of securing it, and it may then be understood that legal tender laws, and protective tariffs as amongst the last and most ingenious devices for transferring one man's product to another man's use, are gross violations of civil liberty. At present the attempt is being made to decry liberty, to magnify the blunders and errors of men in the pursuit of happiness into facts which should be made the basis of generalizations about the functions of government, and to present the phenomena of the commercial crisis as reasons for putting industry once more in leading strings. It is only a new foe with an old face. Those who have held the leading strings of industry in time past have always taken rich pay for their services, and they will do it again.

2. The second form of remedy proposed is quite consistent with the last. It consists in rehabilitating the old and decaying superstition of government. It is called the state, and all kinds of poetical and fanciful attributes are ascribed to it. It is presented, of course, as a superior power, able and ready to get us out of trouble. If an individual is in trouble, he has to help himself or secure the help of friends as best he can, but if a group of persons are in trouble together, they constitute a party, a power, and begin to make themselves felt in the state. The state has no means of helping them except by enabling them to throw the risks and losses of their business upon other people who already have the burdens and losses of their own business to bear, but who are less well organized. The "state" assumes to judge what is for the public interest and imposes taxes or interferes with contracts to force individuals to the course which will realize what it has set before itself. When, however, all the fine phrases are stripped away, it appears that the state is only a group



of men with human interests, passions, and desires, or, worse yet, the state is, as somebody has said, only an obscure clerk hidden in some corner of a governmental bureau. In either case the assumption of superhuman wisdom and virtue is proved false. The state is only a part of the organization of society in and for itself. That organization secures certain interests and provides for certain functions which are important but which would otherwise be neglected. The task of society, however, has always been and is yet, to secure this organization, and yet to prevent the man in whose hands public power must at last be lodged from using it to plunder the governed—that is, to destroy liberty. This is what despots, oligarchs, aristocrats, and democrats always have done, and the latest development is only a new form of the old abuse. The abuses have always been perpetrated in the name of the public interest. It was for the public interest to support the throne and the altar. It was for the public interest to sustain privileged classes, to maintain an established church, standing armies, and the passport and police system. Now, it is for the public interest to have certain industries carried on, and the holders of the state power apportion their favor without rule or reason, without responsibility, and without any return service. In the end, therefore, the high function of the state to regulate the industrial organization in the public interest is simply that the governing group interferes to make some people give the products of their labor to other people to use and enjoy. Every one sees the evils of the state meddling with his own business and thinks that he ought to be let alone in it, but he sees great public interests which would be served if the state would interfere to make other people do what he wants to have them do.

Now if these two measures could be carried out—if liberty could be brought into misapprehension and contempt, and if the state-superstition could be saved from the decay to which it is doomed, the movements of population and the changes in industry, commerce, and finance, could be arrested. The condemnation of all such projects is, once and for all, that they would arrest the march of civilization. The joy and the fears which have been aroused on one side and on the other by the reactionary propositions which have been made during the last five years are both greatly exaggerated. Such reaction-

ary propositions are in the nature of things at such a time. It must be expected that the pressure of distress and disappointed hopes will produce passionate reaction and senseless outcries. From such phenomena to actual practical measures is a long step. Every step towards practical realization of any reactionary measures will encounter new and multiplying obstacles. A war of tariffs at this time would so fly in the face of all the tendencies of commerce and industry that it would only hasten the downfall of all tariffs. Purely retaliatory tariffs are a case of what the children call "cutting off your nose to spite your face." Some follies have become physically impossible for great nations nowadays. Germany has been afflicted: first, by too eager hopes, second, by the great calamity of too many and too pedantic doctors, third, by a declining revenue, and fourth, by socialistic agitation amongst the new electors. It appears that she is about to abandon the free-trade policy although she does not embrace protection with much vigor. The project already comes in conflict with numerous and various difficulties which had not been foreseen, and, in its execution, it must meet with many more. The result remains to be studied. France finds that the expiration of each treaty of commerce produces consequences upon her industry which are unendurable, and while the task of adjusting rival and contending interests so as to create a new system drags along, she is compelled to ward off, by temporary arrangements, the revival of the general tariff which the treaties had superseded. In the meantime her economists, who are the most sober and the best trained in the world, are opening a vigorous campaign on the general issue. If England should think of reviving protection, she would not know what to protect. If she wanted to retaliate, she could only tax raw materials and food. The proposition, as soon as it is reduced to practical form, has no footing. As for ourselves we know that our present protective system never could have been fastened upon us if it had not been concealed under the war legislation, and if its effects had not been confused with those of the war. It could not last now if the public mind could be freed from its absorption in sectional politics, so that it would be at liberty to turn to this subject.

In conclusion, let me refer again to another important subject on which I have touched in this paper—what we call the silver question.

It would, no doubt be in the power of civilized nations to take some steps which would alleviate the inconveniences connected with the transition of several important nations from a silver to a gold currency. For one nation, which has no share in the trouble at all, to come forward out of "magnanimity" or any other motive to save the world from the troubles incident to this step, is quixotic and ridiculous. It might properly leave those who are in the trouble to deal with it amongst themselves. Either they or all might, however, do much to modify the effects of the change. The effort to bring about an international union to establish a bimetallic currency at a fixed ratio is quite another thing. It will stand in the history of our time as the most singular folly which has gained any important adherence. As a practical measure the international union is simply impossible. As a scientific proposition, bimetalism is as absurd as perpetual motion. It proposes to establish perpetual rest in the fluctuations of value of two commodities, to do which it must extinguish the economic forces of supply and demand of those commodities upon which value depends. The movement of the great commercial nations towards a single gold currency is the most important event in the monetary history of our time, and one which nothing can possibly arrest. It produces temporary distress, and the means of alleviating that distress are a proper subject of consideration; but the advantages which will be obtained for all time to come immeasurably surpass the present loss and inconvenience.

I return, then, to the propositions with which I set out. Feebleness and vacillation in regard to economic doctrine are natural to a period of commercial crisis, on account of the distress, uncertainty, and disorder which then prevail in industry and trade; but that is just the time also when a tenacious grasp of scientific principles is of the highest importance. The human race must go forward to meet and conquer its problems and difficulties as they arise, to bear the penalties of its follies, and to pay the price of its acquisitions. To shrink from this is simply to go back and to abandon civilization. The path forward, as far as any human foresight can now reach, lies in a better understanding and a better realization of liberty, under which individuals and societies can work out their destiny, subject only to the incorruptible laws of nature.

COMMENT BY  
*EVANS CLARK*

THE sharpest impression I get from reading Dr. Sumner's address on "Commercial Crises" is its incredible antiquity. The date is 1879, but it is hard to believe only sixty years have passed since then. He spoke of "economic laws"; of the "science of political economy"; of the possibility of the "clear and precise" knowledge of these economic laws; and of "the scientific authority and the positive truth of their (the economists') doctrines," which he said "have been most thoroughly established." Because the world had become "an industrial organism, not a mere mechanical combination" in which "any disturbance in one part of it will derange or vitiate, more or less, the whole," he assumed that "the barriers of race, religion, language and nationality are melting away."

Today those barriers have been materialized in huge fortresses of steel and concrete over which millions of human beings fight each other to the death in a struggle that promises to be the suicide of European civilization; and, where the war has not yet reached, the barriers have become high tariff walls behind which each nation struggles for self-sufficiency. Today most of the "economic laws" of the Victorian Era have gone the way of the good Queen herself and no economist of standing would think of claiming that economics can ever be a "science" in the sense that Professor Sumner thought it was.

"The system of industry," he said, "is built upon the constancy of certain conditions of human existence, upon the certainty of the economic forces which thence arise and upon the fact that those forces act with perfect regularity under changeless laws." The systems of industry of Germany and Russia today—even that of England under threat of annihilation and that which will be ours tomorrow—are tragic evidences of the fact that economic forces have not been acting with perfect regularity under changeless laws. What was left of the assumptions of economic determinism after the last war are now being blasted by the big guns of this one—loaded and fired by dark impulses completely at variance with the self-interest of the economic man.

Professor Sumner lived and wrote about a world that is no more.

He could hardly have been expected to know about the one we live in now. We cherish his memory because, in his world and in his way, he embodied those qualities of fearless intelligence, balance, and good will, now beleaguered, which are the prerequisites of a civilized community.

### COMMENT BY

*WILLIAM S. KNUDSEN*

**T**HE essay by Mr. Sumner on "The Influence of Commercial Crises on Opinions about Economic Doctrines" is remarkable because it deals with the same questions that are before us today, only in a more aggravated form.

Mass production and mass distribution are both in their infancy and we still are suffering from the so-called quack remedies which Sumner wrote about and which appear whenever we have depressions.

The adjustment of conditions, when what Sumner calls economic forces fail to function properly, is generally upset by shortsighted political attempts to solve by edict what should be solved by coöperation. True production and consumption often fall out of balance due to causes beyond simple economic forces, but as a general rule these periods are of short duration.

The human mind is not infallible. Often operations are carried on without proper understanding of the economic forces with which they are dealing, but in some cases, while the upset is bad, progress results because of the very pressure of self-preservation to save an investment or make it a good one instead of bad.

Sumner says that civilization is constantly becoming more uniform and if we keep it goose-stepping without scientific knowledge of the traffic lights necessary to keep it going forward en masse, that our society will break to pieces. In other words, we must progress scientifically en masse also. This to my mind is somewhat chimerical wishful thinking which can never be attained, due to the limitations of the human brain. As much forward progress is due to duress as to research.

Wars, political or social, can occupy the role of either cause or effect of one upon the other. Speculation fever is a powerful factor in economic upsets. The shifting of raw material bases from one place to another upon the earth is a further conflicting interest between the producing groups which causes domestic upsets, particularly when some parliamentary Versailles conference makes a bad job of settlement. All these factors must be studied and analyzed before we can find the solution to the mass-production, mass-distribution problem.

The proposed remedies, as mentioned by Sumner, are known to us all. He forecasts the Nazi system as number one pretty accurately; I suppose because it is as old as the world. Number two is bureaucracy, where the ritual cloaks the inefficiency of the functions. Number three as I read it is a plea for free trade, which is only profitable where one party to the trade is more efficient in handling goods or services than the other.

The concluding paragraph in the essay is the most illuminating and clear concept of what the problem is. My feeling is that the human race can go forward if the economic forces of the countries are marshaled by consent of the governed. Then individual freedom and liberty can remain unfettered. If these same forces have to be marshaled by force, then liberty dies and slavery is born again.

#### COMMENT BY

**HAROLD G. MOULTON**

THE most striking impression one gains from reading this address on "Commercial Crises"—given five and a half years after the beginning of the great depression of the Seventies—is its applicability to present-day conditions. If the article bore no date or authorship, one could well believe that it had been written in the 1930's.

At the time Sumner wrote, and indeed for many years thereafter, most writers on the subject of commercial crises were disposed to attribute the phenomenon to some *single* cause. Sumner defines a com-

mercial crisis as a "disturbance in the harmonious operation of the parts of the industrial organism." He concludes rightly that disharmony may result from any of a series of factors—arising out of mistakes in judgment on the part of enterprisers, in the operation of the money and credit system, or in international, political, and economic conditions. Concretely, he attributes the collapse of 1873 to a lack of confidence resulting from speculative activities and economic and political changes in many countries.

The author's observations upon the tendency of pseudo-economists to find solutions in monetary measures strikes a familiar chord, as does also the observation that prognostication as to future developments is a barren subject of speculation. Of equal interest is his analysis of technological improvements, unemployment, and the redistribution of population.

The reader of today will also find an astonishing parallelism between present tendencies and those of sixty years ago with respect to the relations between government and industry. Sumner notes two basic developments designed to check the growth of the industrial system. The first is the curbing of civil liberties, and the second the enhancement of the role of the state, which he refers to as "rehabilitating the old and decaying superstition of government." His discussion of the nature of the state in relation to the organization of society is of the greatest significance. It is of interest to note that the great liberal, Sumner, looked upon these developments as reactionary propositions, the effect of which would arrest the march of civilization.

## WHAT MAKES THE RICH RICHER AND THE POOR POORER?<sup>1</sup>

**I**T is often affirmed, and it is true, that competition tends to disperse society over a wide range of unequal conditions. Competition develops all powers that exist according to their measure and degree. The more intense competition is, the more thoroughly are all the forces developed. If, then, there is liberty, the results cannot be equal; they must correspond to the forces. Liberty of development and equality of result are therefore diametrically opposed to each other. If a group of men start on equal conditions, and compete in a common enterprise, the results which they attain must differ according to inherited powers, early advantages of training, personal courage, energy, enterprise, perseverance, good sense, etc., etc. Since these things differ through a wide range, and since their combinations may vary through a wide range, it is possible that the results may vary through a wide scale of degrees. Moreover, the more intense the competition, the greater are the prizes of success and the heavier are the penalties of failure. This is illustrated in the competition of a large city as compared with that of a small one. Competition can no more be done away with than gravitation. Its incidence can be changed. We can adopt as a social policy, "Woe to the successful!" We can take the prizes away from the successful and give them to the unsuccessful. It seems clear that there would soon be no prizes at all, but that inference is not universally accepted. In any event, it is plain that we have not got rid of competition—i.e., of the struggle for existence and the competition of life. We have only decided that, if we cannot all have equally, we will all have nothing.

Competition does not guarantee results corresponding with merit, because hereditary conditions and good and bad fortune are always intermingled with merit, but competition secures to merit all the chances it can enjoy under circumstances for which none of one's fellowmen are to blame.

Now it seems to be believed that although competition produces wide grades of inequality, yet almsgiving, or forcible repartition of

1. *Popular Science Monthly*, January, 1887, XXX, 289-296.



wealth, would not do so. Here we come to the real, great, and mischievous fallacy of the social philosophy which is in vogue. Whether there are great extremes of rich and poor in a society is a matter of very little significance; there is no ground for the importance which is attached to that fact in current discussion. It is constantly affirmed in one form or another that, although one man has in half a lifetime greatly improved his own position, and can put his children in a far better condition than that in which he started, nevertheless he has not got his fair share in the gains of civilization, because his neighbor, who started where he did, has become a millionaire. John, who is eating a beefsteak off iron-stone china, finds that the taste of it is spoiled because he knows that James is eating pheasants off gold. William, who would have to walk anyway, finds that his feet ache a great deal worse because he learns that Peter has got a horse. Henry, whose yacht is twenty feet long, is sure that there is something wrong in society because Jacob has one a hundred feet long. These are weaknesses of human nature which have always been the fair game of the satirists, but in our day they are made the basis of a new philosophy and of a redistribution of rights and of property. If the laws and institutions of the society hinder any one from fighting out the battle of life on his or her own behalf to the best of one's ability, especially if they so hinder one to the advantage of another, the field of effort for intelligent and fruitful reform is at once marked out; but if examination should reveal no such operation of laws and institutions, then the inequality of achievements is no indication of any social disease, but the contrary.

The indication of social health or disease is to be sought in quite another fact. The question whether the society is formed of only two classes, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, or whether all the intervening grades are represented in a sound and healthy proportion, is a question which has importance because it furnishes indications of the state and prospects of the society. No society which consists of the two extreme classes only is in a sound and healthy condition.

If we regard the society of a new country, with little government regulation, free institutions, low taxes, and insignificant military duty, as furnishing us with the nearest example of a normal develop-

ment of human society under civilization, then we must infer that such a society would not consist of two well-defined classes widely separated from each other, but that there would be no well-defined classes at all, although its members might, in their extremest range, be far apart in wealth, education, talent, and virtue. Such a society might, as it grew older, and its population became more dense, develop, under high competition, great extremes of economic power and social condition, but there is no reason to suppose that the whole middle range would not be filled up by the great mass of the population.

I have now cleared the ground for the proposition which it is my special purpose, in this paper, to offer:

*It is the tendency of all social burdens to crush out the middle class, and to force the society into an organization of only two classes, one at each social extreme.*

It is in the nature of the case impracticable to adjust social burdens proportionately to the power of individuals to support them. If this could be done, it is possible that the burdens might become great, even excessive, without producing the effect which I have stated. Since, however, it is impossible to so adjust them, and they must be laid on "equally" with reference to the unit of service, and not with reference to some unit of capacity to endure them, it follows that the effect must be as stated. So soon as the burden becomes so great that it surpasses the power of some part of the society, a division takes place between those who can and those who cannot endure it. At first, those who are close to this line, but just above it, are not far removed from those who are close to it, but just below it; but, as time goes on, and the pressure continues to operate, they are constantly separated from each other by a wider and wider interval.

My generalization might even be made broader. It is the tendency of all the hardships of life to destroy the middle class. Capital, as it grows larger, takes on new increments with greater and greater ease. It acquires a kind of momentum. The rich man, therefore, can endure the shocks of material calamity and misfortune with less distress the richer he is. A bad season may throw a small farmer into debt from which he can never recover. It may not do more to a large farmer than lessen one year's income. A few years of hard times may drive

into bankruptcy a great number of men of small capital, while a man of large capital may tide over the distress and put himself in a position to make great gains when prosperity comes again.

The hardships and calamities which are strictly social are such as come from disorder, violence, insecurity, covetousness, envy, etc. The state has for its function to repress all these. It appears from what I have said that it is hard to maintain a middle class on a high stage of civilization. If the state does not do its work properly, such classes, representing the wide distribution of comfort and well-being, will die out. If the state itself gives license to robbery and spoliation, or enforces almsgiving, it is working to destroy the whole middle class, and to divide society into two great classes, the rich who are growing richer, not by industry but by spoliation, and the poor who are growing poorer, not by industrial weakness but by oppression.

Now, a state which is in any degree socialistic is in that degree on the line of policy whose disastrous effects have here been described. The state, it cannot too often be repeated, has nothing, and can give nothing, which it does not take from somebody. Its victims must be those who have earned and saved, and they must be the broad, strong, middle classes, from whom alone any important contributions can be drawn. They must be impoverished. Its pets, whoever they may be, must be pauperized and proletarianized. Its agents alone—that is, those who, in the name of the state, perform the operation of taking from some to give to others—can become rich, and if ever such a state should be organized they may realize wealth beyond the dreams of a proconsul.

To people untrained in the study of social forces it may appear the most obvious thing in the world that, if we should confiscate the property of those who have more than a determined amount, and divide the proceeds among those who have less than a certain amount, we should strengthen the middle class, and do away with the two extremes. The effect would be exactly the opposite. We should diminish the middle classes and strengthen the extremes. The more we helped at the bottom, the more we should have to help, not only on account of the increase of the population and the influx of eager members of "the house of want," but also on account of the demoralization of the lowest sections of the middle class who were excluded. The more we confiscated at the top, the more craft and fraud would be brought

into play to escape confiscation, and the wider must be the scope of taxation over the upper middle classes to obtain the necessary means.

The modern middle class have been developed with, and in, an industrial civilization. In turn they have taken control of this civilization and developed social and civil institutions to accord with it. The organization which they have made is now called, in the cant of a certain school, "capitalism" and a "capitalistic system." It is the first organization of human society that ever has existed based on rights. By virtue of its own institutions, it now puts itself on trial and stands open to revision and correction whenever, on sober and rational grounds, revision can be shown to be necessary to guarantee the rights of anyone. It is the first organization of human society that has ever tolerated dissent or criticism of itself. Nobles and peasants have never made anything but Poland and Russia. The proletariat has never made anything but revolution. The socialistic state holds out no promise that it will ever tolerate dissent. It will never consider the question of reform. It stands already on the same footing as all the old states. It knows that it is right, and *all* right. Of course, therefore, there is no place in it for reform. With extreme reconstructions of society, however, it may not be worth while to trouble ourselves; what we need to perceive is, that all socialistic measures, whatever their degree, have the same tendency and effect. It is they which may be always described as tending to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, and to extinguish the intervening classes.

#### COMMENT BY

*C. M. CHESTER*

**F**OR several decades we have been in the throes of an industrial revolution. Apparently some people still are not aware of it, or of its effects on virtually all of the thirty million American families. If the situation were realistically understood by a sizable majority of the American people, many obstructions would be removed which now delay a New World march to greater social and economic progress.

Wise and farsighted beyond his time, William Graham Sumner un-

derstood what was going on. He realized the dangers of forces tending toward un-American class antagonisms, just as he saw that the "modern middle class has been developed with, and in, an industrial civilization." He saw, too, the dangers threatening this middle class.

But I wonder if even a great essayist with a social eye like a modern telephoto camera lens could have foreseen the remarkable benefits to the American middle class from the processes of modern management.

The truth of the matter is that modern, efficient, socially conscious industry of *necessity* has widened the opportunities and horizon of our middle class. I hope the day is coming when there will be far fewer poor people in our Western society.

Obviously, highly competitive modern business, dependent upon huge volume production and sales, requires great masses of consumers who are themselves gainfully employed and able to buy industry's products and services.

Further, industry functions better with the participation of millions of stockholders, mostly in moderate circumstances, as is the case today.

Fortunately, in the United States the economic potentials of the domestic market alone are so great that even widespread unemployment is likely to be remedied, whereupon we should reach a higher economic level made up more largely of a prosperous middle class.

This new level, of course, will be reached more quickly if the philosophy of mutual respect and coöperation advocated by enlightened management is put to work by our essential elements, including consumers, business, labor, agriculture, finance, education, and government. The goal becomes clearer day by day. I like to call it *shared progress*.

## STRIKES AND THE INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION<sup>1</sup>

ANYONE who has read with attention the current discussion of labor topics must have noticed that writers start from assumptions, in regard to the doctrine of wages, which are as divergent as notions on the same subject-matter well can be. It appears, therefore, that we must have a dogma of wages, that we cannot reason correctly about the policy or the rights of the wages system until we have such a dogma, and that, in the meantime, it is not strange that confusion and absurdity should be the chief marks of discussion carried on before this prime condition is fulfilled.

Some writers assume that wages can be raised if the prices of products be raised, and that no particular difficulty would be experienced in raising prices; others assume that wages could be raised if the employers would be satisfied with smaller profits for themselves; still others assume that wages could be raised or lowered according as the cost of living rises or falls. These are common and popular assumptions, and have nothing to do with the controversies of professional economists about the doctrine of wages. The latter are a disgrace to the science, and have the especial evil at this time that the science cannot respond to the chief demand now made upon it.

If the employer could simply add any increase of wages to his prices, and so recoup himself at the expense of the consumer, no employer would hold out long against a strike. Why should he? Why should he undertake loss, worry, and war, for the sake of the consumers behind him? If an employer need only submit to a positive and measurable curtailment of his profits, in order to avoid a strike and secure peace, it is probable that he would in almost every case submit to it. But if the employees should demand five per cent advance, and the employer should grant it, adding so much to his prices, they would naturally and most properly immediately demand another five per cent, to be charged to the consumers in the same way. There would be no other course for men of common sense to pursue. They would repeat this process until at some point or other they found

1. *Popular Science News*, July, 1887.

themselves arrested by some resistance which they could not overcome. Similarly, if wages could be increased at the expense of the employer's gains, the employer who yielded one increase would have to yield another, until at some point he decided to refuse and resist. In either case, where and what would the limit be? Whenever the point was reached at which some unconquerable resistance was encountered, the task of the economist would begin.

There is no rule whatever for determining the share which anyone ought to get out of the distribution of products through the industrial organization, except that he should get all that the market will give him in return for what he has put into it. Whenever, therefore, the limit is reached, the task of the economist is to find out the conditions by which this limit is determined.

Now it is the character of the modern industrial system that it becomes more and more impersonal and automatic under the play of social forces which act with natural necessity; the system could not exist if they did not so act, for it is constructed in reliance upon their action according to ascertainable laws. The condition of all social actions and reactions is therefore set in the nature of the forces which we have learned to know on other fields of scientific investigation, and which are different here only inasmuch as they act in a different field and on different material. The relations of parties, therefore, in the industrial organism is such as the nature of the case permits. The case may permit of a variety of relations, thus providing some range of choice.

A person who comes into the market, therefore, with something to sell, cannot raise the price of it because he wants to do so, or because his "cost of production" has been raised. He has already pushed the market to the utmost, and raised the price as high as supply and demand would allow, so as to win as large profits as he could. How, then, can he raise it further, just because his own circumstances make it desirable for him so to do? If the market stands so that he can raise his price, he will do it, whether his cost of production has increased or not. Neither can an employer reduce his own profits at will; he will immediately perceive that he is going out of business, and distributing his capital in presents.

The difficulty with a strike, therefore, is, that it is an attempt to move the whole industrial organization, in which all the parts are in-

terdependent and intersupporting. It is not, indeed, impossible to do this, although it is very difficult. The organization has a great deal of elasticity in its parts—an aggressive organ can win something at the expense of others. Everything displaces everything else; but if force enough is brought to bear, a general displacement and readjustment may be brought about. An organ which has been suffering from the aggression of others may right itself. It is only by the collision of social pressure, constantly maintained, that the life of the organism is kept up, and its forces are developed to their full effect.

Strikes are not necessarily connected with violence to either persons or property. Violence is provided for by the criminal law. Taking strikes by themselves, therefore, it may be believed that they are not great evils; they are costly, but they test the market. Supply and demand does not mean that the social forces will operate of themselves; the law, as laid down, assumes that every party will struggle to the utmost for its interests—if it does not do so, it will lose its interests. Buyers and sellers, borrowers and lenders, landlords and tenants, employers and employees, and all other parties to contracts, must be expected to develop their interests fully in the competition and struggle of life. It is for the health of the industrial organization that they should do so. The other social interests are in the constant habit of testing the market, in order to get all they can out of it. A strike, rationally begun and rationally conducted, only does the same thing for the wage-earning interest.

The facts stare us plainly in the face, if we will only look at them, that the wages of the employees and the price of the products have nothing to do with each other; that the wages have nothing to do with the profits of the employer; that they have nothing to do with the cost of living or with the prosperity of the business. They are really governed by the supply and demand of labor, as every strike shows us, and by nothing else.

Turning to the moral relations of the subject, we are constantly exhorted to do something to improve the relations of employer and employee. I submit that the relation in life which has the least bad feeling or personal bitterness in it is the pure business relation, the relation of contract, because it is a relation of bargain and consent and equivalence. Where is there so much dissension and bitterness as in family matters, where people try to act by sentiment and affec-



tion? The way to improve the relation of employer and employee is not to get sentiment into it, but to get sentiment out of it. We are told that classes are becoming more separated, and that the poor are learning to hate the rich, although there was a time when no class hatreds existed. I have sought diligently in history for the time when no class hatreds existed between rich and poor. I cannot find any such period, and I make bold to say that no one can point to it.

### COMMENT BY

*HENRY S. DENNISON*

**F**IRST impressions of this essay of Sumner's might make one wonder if his faithful Spencerian steel pen had strayed too close to some living flame and lost, for a moment, its diamond temper. "Taking strikes by themselves, therefore, it may be believed that they are not great evils; they are costly, but they test the market." Can these be words of the most forthright, rugged, and honest individualist of his rugged day?

Second thoughts offer the suggestion that his attention was really focused upon the belaboring of the political economists whose sloppy thinking—whose "controversies about the doctrine of wages"—were "a disgrace to the science." And there is merit in the suggestion.

On a third reading one sees more deeply and with more satisfaction into the truer harmony. The man who was opposed to Sherman Acts would not deny function to a strike which *could* occur, because it expressed so strong a particular "social interest." "The law, as laid down, assumes that every party will struggle to the utmost for its interests. . . ."

This essay was written in 1887, when matter was atoms and atoms were hard pool balls, numbered and strangely interrelated—but each elemental one, nevertheless, a rugged individual. "The modern industrial system . . . under the play of social forces which act with *natural necessity* . . . is constructed in reliance upon their action according to ascertainable laws." For more than ten years after that we were expecting any day to fill in the last unknown in the great

cosmic equation which should answer all things. What a glorious world for clean, clear minds like Spencer's and Sumner's. It left us most uncomfortably a genetic allergy to Uncertainty Principles, Special and General Relativities, and Dynamic Political Economics.

COMMENT BY  
*WILLIAM GREEN*

WHEN Mr. Sumner wrote his essay on "Strikes and the Industrial Organization" (1887), trade agreements reached by collective bargaining were exceptional. Employers usually vigorously opposed united labor action, forming militant employers' associations the better to prevent workers from acting through trade unions. Consequently strikes and lockouts were so numerous as to appear the normal course of industrial organization.

Today, with more experience of union practices, we may agree with Mr. Sumner that "every party will struggle to the utmost for its interests," without subscribing to his extreme and erroneous statement that "the wages have nothing to do with the profits of the employer; that they have nothing to do with the cost of living or with the prosperity of the business. They are really governed by the supply and demand of labor, as every strike shows us, and by nothing else." The broader interests of employers and workers alike frequently preclude that expensive form of "testing the market"—the strike.

Workers recognize that labor costs—not just wage rates, but the true costs based on productivity of labor—are important in the employer's total costs, and they want him to make a fair profit. Unions have frequently helped a business increase its profit when they were bargaining for a fair share for the employees. Some employers also recognize that workers are more efficient producers when their wages provide reasonable living standards. Therefore, they do not take full advantage of a labor surplus to force down the wages whenever "supply of labor" would permit. It is not sentiment but good business sense which dictates that the best employer-employee relationships

depend on mutual respect for the bargaining strength of the other party and an honest determination to share on a fair basis the proceeds of doing business together.

Strikes remain a method of securing for labor its fair share when employers take a narrow view of their "interests," but when strong organizations on each side arrive at collective contracts by bargaining—considering fairly profits, labor productivity, and costs of living—bitterness is removed and a costly market "test" is unnecessary. This is the goal of modern labor organizations and employers.

## THE CHALLENGE OF FACTS<sup>1</sup>

**S**Ocialism is no new thing. In one form or another it is to be found throughout all history. It arises from an observation of certain harsh facts in the lot of man on earth, the concrete expression of which is poverty and misery. These facts challenge us. It is folly to try to shut our eyes to them. We have first to notice what they are, and then to face them squarely.

Man is born under the necessity of sustaining the existence he has received by an onerous struggle against nature, both to win what is essential to his life and to ward off what is prejudicial to it. He is born under a burden and a necessity. Nature holds what is essential to him, but she offers nothing gratuitously. He may win for his use what she holds, if he can. Only the most meager and inadequate supply for human needs can be obtained directly from nature. There are trees which may be used for fuel and for dwellings, but labor is required to fit them for this use. There are ores in the ground, but labor is necessary to get out the metals and make tools or weapons. For any real satisfaction, labor is necessary to fit the products of nature for human use. In this struggle every individual is under the pressure of the necessities for food, clothing, shelter, fuel, and every individual brings with him more or less energy for the conflict necessary to supply his needs. The relation, therefore, between each man's needs and each man's energy, or "individualism," is the first fact of human life.

It is not without reason, however, that we speak of a "man" as the individual in question, for women (mothers) and children have special disabilities for the struggle with nature, and these disabilities grow greater and last longer as civilization advances. The perpetuation of the race in health and vigor, and its success as a whole in its struggle to expand and develop human life on earth, therefore, require that the head of the family shall, by his energy, be able to supply not only his own needs, but those of the organisms which are dependent upon him. The history of the human race shows a great variety of experiments in the relation of the sexes and in the organization of the family. These experiments have been controlled by eco-

1. Written in the 1880's. Original title was Socialism.

conomic circumstances, but, as man has gained more and more control over economic circumstances, monogamy and the family education of children have been more and more sharply developed. If there is one thing in regard to which the student of history and sociology can affirm with confidence that social institutions have made "progress" or grown "better," it is in this arrangement of marriage and the family. All experience proves that monogamy, pure and strict, is the sex relation which conduces most to the vigor and intelligence of the race, and that the family education of children is the institution by which the race as a whole advances most rapidly, from generation to generation, in the struggle with nature. Love of man and wife, as we understand it, is a modern sentiment. The devotion and sacrifice of parents for children is a sentiment which has been developed steadily and is now more intense and far more widely practiced throughout society than in earlier times. The relation is also coming to be regarded in a light quite different from that in which it was formerly viewed. It used to be believed that the parent had unlimited claims on the child and rights over him. In a truer view of the matter, we are coming to see that the rights are on the side of the child and the duties on the side of the parent. Existence is not a boon for which the child owes all subjection to the parent. It is a responsibility assumed by the parent towards the child without the child's consent, and the consequence of it is that the parent owes all possible devotion to the child to enable him to make his existence happy and successful.

The value and importance of the family sentiments, from a social point of view, cannot be exaggerated. They impose self-control and prudence in their most important social bearings, and tend more than any other forces to hold the individual up to the virtues which make the sound man and the valuable member of society. The race is bound, from generation to generation, in an unbroken chain of vice and penalty, virtue and reward. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, while, on the other hand, health, vigor, talent, genius, and skill are, so far as we can discover, the results of high physical vigor and wise early training. The popular language bears witness to the universal observation of these facts, although general social and political dogmas have come into fashion which contradict or ignore them. There is no other such punishment for a life of vice and self-indulgence as to see children grow up cursed with the penalties of it,

and no such reward for self-denial and virtue as to see children born and grow up vigorous in mind and body. It is time that the true import of these observations for moral and educational purposes was developed, and it may well be questioned whether we do not go too far in our reticence in regard to all these matters when we leave it to romances and poems to do almost all the educational work that is done in the way of spreading ideas about them. The defense of marriage and the family, if their sociological value were better understood, would be not only instinctive but rational. The struggle for existence with which we have to deal must be understood, then, to be that of a man for himself, his wife, and his children.

The next great fact we have to notice in regard to the struggle of human life is that labor which is spent in a direct struggle with nature is severe in the extreme and is but slightly productive. To subjugate nature, man needs weapons and tools. These, however, cannot be won unless the food and clothing and other prime and direct necessities are supplied in such amount that they can be consumed while tools and weapons are being made, for the tools and weapons themselves satisfy no needs directly. A man who tills the ground with his fingers or with a pointed stick picked up without labor will get a small crop. To fashion even the rudest spade or hoe will cost time, during which the laborer must still eat and drink and wear, but the tool, when obtained, will multiply immensely the power to produce. Such products of labor, used to assist production, have a function so peculiar in the nature of things that we need to distinguish them. We call them capital. A lever is capital, and the advantage of lifting a weight with a lever over lifting it by direct exertion is only a feeble illustration of the power of capital in production. The origin of capital lies in the darkness before history, and it is probably impossible for us to imagine the slow and painful steps by which the race began the formation of it. Since then it has gone on rising to higher and higher powers by a ceaseless involution, if I may use a mathematical expression. Capital is labor raised to a higher power by being constantly multiplied into itself. Nature has been more and more subjugated by the human race through the power of capital, and every human being now living shares the improved status of the race to a degree which neither he nor any one else can measure, and for which he pays nothing.

Let us understand this point, because our subject will require future reference to it. It is the most short-sighted ignorance not to see that, in a civilized community, all the advantage of capital except a small fraction is gratuitously enjoyed by the community. For instance, suppose the case of a man utterly destitute of tools, who is trying to till the ground with a pointed stick. He could get something out of it. If now he should obtain a spade with which to till the ground, let us suppose, for illustration, that he could get twenty times as great a product. Could, then, the owner of a spade in a civilized state demand, as its price, from the man who had no spade, nineteen-twentieths of the product which could be produced by the use of it? Certainly not. The price of a spade is fixed by the supply and demand of products in the community. A spade is bought for a dollar and the gain from the use of it is an inheritance of knowledge, experience, and skill which every man who lives in a civilized state gets for nothing. What we pay for steam transportation is no trifle, but imagine, if you can, eastern Massachusetts cut off from steam connection with the rest of the world, turnpikes and sailing vessels remaining. The cost of food would rise so high that a quarter of the population would starve to death and another quarter would have to emigrate. To-day every man here gets an enormous advantage from the status of a society on a level of steam transportation, telegraph, and machinery, for which he pays nothing.

So far as I have yet spoken, we have before us the struggle of man with nature, but the social problems, strictly speaking, arise at the next step. Each man carries on the struggle to win his support for himself, but there are others by his side engaged in the same struggle. If the stores of nature were unlimited, or if the last unit of the supply she offers could be won as easily as the first, there would be no social problem. If a square mile of land could support an indefinite number of human beings, or if it cost only twice as much labor to get forty bushels of wheat from an acre as to get twenty, we should have no social problem. If a square mile of land could support millions, no one would ever emigrate and there would be no trade or commerce. If it cost only twice as much labor to get forty bushels as twenty, there would be no advance in the arts. The fact is far otherwise. So long as the population is low in proportion to the amount of land, on a given stage of the arts, life is easy and the com-

petition of man with man is weak. When more persons are trying to live on a square mile than it can support, on the existing stage of the arts, life is hard and the competition of man with man is intense. In the former case, industry and prudence may be on a low grade; the penalties are not severe, or certain, or speedy. In the latter case, each individual needs to exert on his own behalf every force, original or acquired, which he can command. In the former case, the average condition will be one of comfort and the population will be all nearly on the average. In the latter case, the average condition will not be one of comfort, but the population will cover wide extremes of comfort and misery. Each will find his place according to his ability and his effort. The former society will be democratic; the latter will be aristocratic.

The constant tendency of population to outstrip the means of subsistence is the force which has distributed population over the world, and produced all advance in civilization. To this day the two means of escape for an overpopulated country are emigration and an advance in the arts. The former wins more land for the same people; the latter makes the same land support more persons. If, however, either of these means opens a chance for an increase of population, it is evident that the advantage so won may be speedily exhausted if the increase takes place. The social difficulty has only undergone a temporary amelioration, and when the conditions of pressure and competition are renewed, misery and poverty reappear. The victims of them are those who have inherited disease and depraved appetites, or have been brought up in vice and ignorance, or have themselves yielded to vice, extravagance, idleness, and imprudence. In the last analysis, therefore, we come back to vice, in its original and hereditary forms, as the correlative of misery and poverty.

The condition for the complete and regular action of the force of competition is liberty. Liberty means the security given to each man that, if he employs his energies to sustain the struggle on behalf of himself and those he cares for, he shall dispose of the product exclusively as he chooses. It is impossible to know whence any definition or criterion of justice can be derived, if it is not deduced from this view of things; or if it is not the definition of justice that each shall enjoy the fruit of his own labor and self-denial, and of injustice that the idle and the industrious, the self-indulgent and the self-denying, shall



share equally in the product. Aside from the *a priori* speculations of philosophers who have tried to make equality an essential element in justice, the human race has recognized, from the earliest times, the above conception of justice as the true one, and has founded upon it the right of property. The right of property, with marriage and the family, gives the right of bequest.

Monogamic marriage, however, is the most exclusive of social institutions. It contains, as essential principles, preference, superiority, selection, devotion. It would not be at all what it is if it were not for these characteristic traits, and it always degenerates when these traits are not present. For instance, if a man should not have a distinct preference for the woman he married, and if he did not select her as superior to others, the marriage would be an imperfect one according to the standard of true monogamic marriage. The family under monogamy, also, is a closed group, having special interests and estimating privacy and reserve as valuable advantages for family development. We grant high prerogatives, in our society, to parents, although our observation teaches us that thousands of human beings are unfit to be parents or to be entrusted with the care of children. It follows, therefore, from the organization of marriage and the family, under monogamy, that great inequalities must exist in a society based on those institutions. The son of wise parents cannot start on a level with the son of foolish ones, and the man who has had no home discipline cannot be equal to the man who has had home discipline. If the contrary were true, we could rid ourselves at once of the wearing labor of inculcating sound morals and manners in our children.

Private property, also, which we have seen to be a feature of society organized in accordance with the natural conditions of the struggle for existence produces inequalities between men. The struggle for existence is aimed against nature. It is from her niggardly hand that we have to wrest the satisfactions for our needs, but our fellow-men are our competitors for the meager supply. Competition, therefore, is a law of nature. Nature is entirely neutral; she submits to him who most energetically and resolutely assails her. She grants her rewards to the fittest, therefore, without regard to other considerations of any kind. If, then, there be liberty, men get from her just in proportion to their works, and their having and enjoying are just in proportion to their being and their doing. Such is the system of

nature. If we do not like it, and if we try to amend it, there is only one way in which we can do it. We can take from the better and give to the worse. We can deflect the penalties of those who have done ill and throw them on those who have done better. We can take the rewards from those who have done better and give them to those who have done worse. We shall thus lessen the inequalities. We shall favor the survival of the unfittest, and we shall accomplish this by destroying liberty. Let it be understood that we cannot go outside of this alternative: liberty, inequality, survival of the fittest; not-liberty, equality, survival of the unfittest. The former carries society forward and favors all its best members; the latter carries society downwards and favors all its worst members.

For three hundred years now men have been trying to understand and realize liberty. Liberty is not the right or chance to do what we choose; there is no such liberty as that on earth. No man can do as he chooses: the autocrat of Russia or the King of Dahomey has limits to his arbitrary will; the savage in the wilderness, whom some people think free, is the slave of routine, tradition, and superstitious fears; the civilized man must earn his living, or take care of his property, or concede his own will to the rights and claims of his parents, his wife, his children, and all the persons with whom he is connected by the ties and contracts of civilized life.

What we mean by liberty is civil liberty, or liberty under law; and this means the guarantees of law that a man shall not be interfered with while using his own powers for his own welfare. It is, therefore, a civil and political status; and that nation has the freest institutions in which the guarantees of peace for the laborer and security for the capitalist are the highest. Liberty, therefore, does not by any means do away with the struggle for existence. We might as well try to do away with the need of eating, for that would, in effect, be the same thing. What civil liberty does is to turn the competition of man with man from violence and brute force into an industrial competition under which men vie with one another for the acquisition of material goods by industry, energy, skill, frugality, prudence, temperance, and other industrial virtues. Under this changed order of things the inequalities are not done away with. Nature still grants her rewards of having and enjoying, according to our being and doing, but it is now the man of the highest training and not the man of the heaviest

fist who gains the highest reward. It is impossible that the man with capital and the man without capital should be equal. To affirm that they are equal would be to say that a man who has no tool can get as much food out of the ground as the man who has a spade or a plough; or that the man who has no weapon can defend himself as well against hostile beasts or hostile men as the man who has a weapon. If that were so, none of us would work any more. We work and deny ourselves to get capital just because, other things being equal, the man who has it is superior, for attaining all the ends of life, to the man who has it not. Considering the eagerness with which we all seek capital and the estimate we put upon it, either in cherishing it if we have it, or envying others who have it while we have it not, it is very strange what platitudes pass current about it in our society so soon as we begin to generalize about it. If our young people really believed some of the teachings they hear, it would not be amiss to preach them a sermon once in a while to reassure them, setting forth that it is not wicked to be rich, nay even, that it is not wicked to be richer than your neighbor.

It follows from what we have observed that it is the utmost folly to denounce capital. To do so is to undermine civilization, for capital is the first requisite of every social gain, educational, ecclesiastical, political, æsthetic, or other.

It must also be noticed that the popular antithesis between persons and capital is very fallacious. Every law or institution which protects persons at the expense of capital makes it easier for persons to live and to increase the number of consumers of capital while lowering all the motives to prudence and frugality by which capital is created. Hence every such law or institution tends to produce a large population, sunk in misery. All poor laws and all eleemosynary institutions and expenditures have this tendency. On the contrary, all laws and institutions which give security to capital against the interests of other persons than its owners, restrict numbers while preserving the means of subsistence. Hence every such law or institution tends to produce a small society on a high stage of comfort and well-being. It follows that the antithesis commonly thought to exist between the protection of persons and the protection of property is in reality only an antithesis between numbers and quality.

I must stop to notice, in passing, one other fallacy which is rather

scientific than popular. The notion is attributed to certain economists that economic forces are self-correcting. I do not know of any economists who hold this view, but what is intended probably is that many economists, of whom I venture to be one, hold that economic forces act compensatingly, and that whenever economic forces have so acted as to produce an unfavorable situation, other economic forces are brought into action which correct the evil and restore the equilibrium. For instance, in Ireland overpopulation and exclusive devotion to agriculture, both of which are plainly traceable to unwise statesmanship in the past, have produced a situation of distress. Steam navigation on the ocean has introduced the competition of cheaper land with Irish agriculture. The result is a social and industrial crisis. There are, however, millions of acres of fertile land on earth which are unoccupied and which are open to the Irish, and the economic forces are compelling the direct corrective of the old evils, in the way of emigration or recourse to urban occupations by unskilled labor. Any number of economic and legal nostrums have been proposed for this situation, all of which propose to leave the original causes untouched. We are told that economic causes do not correct themselves. That is true. We are told that when an economic situation becomes very grave it goes on from worse to worse and that there is no cycle through which it returns. That is not true, without further limitation. We are told that moral forces alone can elevate any such people again. But it is plain that a people which has sunk below the reach of the economic forces of self-interest has certainly sunk below the reach of moral forces, and that this objection is superficial and short-sighted. What is true is that economic forces always go before moral forces. Men feel self-interest long before they feel prudence, self-control, and temperance. They lose the moral forces long before they lose the economic forces. If they can be regenerated at all, it must be first by distress appealing to self-interest and forcing recourse to some expedient for relief. Emigration is certainly an economic force for the relief of Irish distress. It is a palliative only, when considered in itself, but the virtue of it is that it gives the non-emigrating population a chance to rise to a level on which the moral forces can act upon them. Now it is terribly true that only the better ones emigrate, and only the better ones among those who remain are capable of having their ambition and energy awakened, but for the

rest the solution is famine and death, with a social regeneration through decay and the elimination of that part of the society which is not capable of being restored to health and life. As Mr. Huxley once said, the method of nature is not even a word and a blow, with the blow first. No explanation is vouchsafed. We are left to find out for ourselves why our ears are boxed. If we do not find out, and find out correctly, what the error is for which we are being punished, the blow is repeated and poverty, distress, disease, and death finally remove the incorrigible ones. It behooves us men to study these terrible illustrations of the penalties which follow on bad statesmanship, and of the sanctions by which social laws are enforced. The economic cycle does complete itself; it must do so, unless the social group is to sink in permanent barbarism. A law may be passed which shall force somebody to support the hopelessly degenerate members of a society, but such a law can only perpetuate the evil and entail it on future generations with new accumulations of distress.

The economic forces work with moral forces and are their hand-maidens, but the economic forces are far more primitive, original, and universal. The glib generalities in which we sometimes hear people talk, as if you could set moral and economic forces separate from and in antithesis to each other, and discard the one to accept and work by the other, gravely misconstrue the realities of the social order.

We have now before us the facts of human life out of which the social problem springs. These facts are in many respects hard and stern. It is by strenuous exertion only that each one of us can sustain himself against the destructive forces and the ever recurring needs of life; and the higher the degree to which we seek to carry our development the greater is the proportionate cost of every step. For help in the struggle we can only look back to those in the previous generation who are responsible for our existence. In the competition of life the son of wise and prudent ancestors has immense advantages over the son of vicious and imprudent ones. The man who has capital possesses immeasurable advantages for the struggle of life over him who has none. The more we break down privileges of class, or industry, and establish liberty, the greater will be the inequalities and the more exclusively will the vicious bear the penalties. Poverty and misery will exist in society just so long as vice exists in human nature.

I now go on to notice some modes of trying to deal with this problem. There is a modern philosophy which has never been taught systematically, but which has won the faith of vast masses of people in the modern civilized world. For want of a better name it may be called the sentimental philosophy. It has colored all modern ideas and institutions in politics, religion, education, charity, and industry, and is widely taught in popular literature, novels, and poetry, and in the pulpit. The first proposition of this sentimental philosophy is that nothing is true which is disagreeable. If, therefore, any facts of observation show that life is grim or hard, the sentimental philosophy steps over such facts with a genial platitude, a consoling commonplace, or a gratifying dogma. The effect is to spread an easy optimism, under the influence of which people spare themselves labor and trouble, reflection and forethought, pains and caution—all of which are hard things, and to admit the necessity for which would be to admit that the world is not all made smooth and easy, for us to pass through it surrounded by love, music, and flowers.

Under this philosophy, "progress" has been represented as a steadily increasing and unmixed good; as if the good steadily encroached on the evil without involving any new and other forms of evil; and as if we could plan great steps in progress in our academies and lyceums, and then realize them by resolution. To minds trained to this way of looking at things, any evil which exists is a reproach. We have only to consider it, hold some discussions about it, pass resolutions, and have done with it. Every moment of delay is, therefore, a social crime. It is monstrous to say that misery and poverty are as constant as vice and evil passions of men! People suffer so under misery and poverty! Assuming, therefore, that we can solve all these problems and eradicate all these evils by expending our ingenuity upon them, of course we cannot hasten too soon to do it.

A social philosophy, consonant with this, has also been taught for a century. It could not fail to be popular, for it teaches that ignorance is as good as knowledge, vulgarity as good as refinement, shiftlessness as good as painstaking, shirking as good as faithful striving, poverty as good as wealth, filth as good as cleanliness—in short, that quality goes for nothing in the measurement of men, but only numbers. Culture, knowledge, refinement, skill, and taste cost labor, but we have been taught that they have only individual, not social

value, and that socially they are rather drawbacks than otherwise. In public life we are taught to admire roughness, illiteracy, and rowdiness. The ignorant, idle, and shiftless have been taught that they are "the people," that the generalities inculcated at the same time about the dignity, wisdom, and virtue of "the people" are true of them, that they have nothing to learn to be wise, but that, as they stand, they possess a kind of infallibility, and that to their "opinion" the wise must bow. It is not cause for wonder if whole sections of these classes have begun to use the powers and wisdom attributed to them for their interests, as they construe them, and to trample on all the excellence which marks civilization as an obsolete superstition.

Another development of the same philosophy is the doctrine that men come into the world endowed with "natural rights," or as joint inheritors of the "rights of man," which have been "declared" times without number during the last century. The divine rights of man have succeeded to the obsolete divine right of kings. If it is true, then, that a man is born with rights, he comes into the world with claims on somebody besides his parents. Against whom does he hold such rights? There can be no rights against nature or against God. A man may curse his fate because he is born of an inferior race, or with an hereditary disease, or blind, or, as some members of the race seem to do, because they are born females; but they get no answer to their imprecations. But, now, if men have rights by birth, these rights must hold against their fellow-men and must mean that somebody else is to spend his energy to sustain the existence of the persons so born. What then becomes of the natural rights of the one whose energies are to be diverted from his own interests? If it be said that we should all help each other, that means simply that the race as a whole should advance and expand as much and as fast as it can in its career on earth; and the experience on which we are now acting has shown that we shall do this best under liberty and under the organization which we are now developing, by leaving each to exert his energies for his own success. The notion of natural rights is destitute of sense, but it is captivating, and it is the more available on account of its vagueness. It lends itself to the most vicious kind of social dogmatism, for if a man has natural rights, then the reasoning is clear

up to the finished socialistic doctrine that a man has a natural right to whatever he needs, and that the measure of his claims is the wishes which he wants fulfilled. If, then, he has a need, who is bound to satisfy it for him? Who holds the obligation corresponding to his right? It must be the one who possesses what will satisfy that need, or else the state which can take the possession from those who have earned and saved it, and give it to him who needs it and who, by the hypothesis, has not earned and saved it.

It is with the next step, however, that we come to the complete and ruinous absurdity of this view. If a man may demand from those who have a share of what he needs and has not, may he demand the same also for his wife and for his children, and for how many children? The industrious and prudent man who takes the course of labor and self-denial to secure capital, finds that he must defer marriage, both in order to save and to devote his life to the education of fewer children. The man who can claim a share in another's product has no such restraint. The consequence would be that the industrious and prudent would labor and save, without families, to support the idle and improvident who would increase and multiply, until universal destitution forced a return to the principles of liberty and property; and the man who started with the notion that the world owed him a living would once more find, as he does now, that the world pays him its debt in the state prison.

The most specious application of the dogma of rights is to labor. It is said that every man has a right to work. The world is full of work to be done. Those who are willing to work find that they have three days' work to do in every day that comes. Work is the necessity to which we are born. It is not a right, but an irksome necessity, and men escape it whenever they can get the fruits of labor without it. What they want is the fruits, or wages, not work. But wages are capital which some one has earned and saved. If he and the workman can agree on the terms on which he will part with his capital, there is no more to be said. If not, then the right must be set up in a new form. It is now not a right to work, nor even a right to wages, but a right to a certain rate of wages, and we have simply returned to the old doctrine of spoliation again. It is immaterial whether the demand for wages be addressed to an individual capitalist or to a civil



body, for the latter can give no wages which it does not collect by taxes out of the capital of those who have labored and saved.

Another application is in the attempt to fix the hours of labor *per diem* by law. If a man is forbidden to labor over eight hours per day (and the law has no sense or utility for the purposes of those who want it until it takes this form), he is forbidden to exercise so much industry as he may be willing to expend in order to accumulate capital for the improvement of his circumstances.

A century ago there were very few wealthy men except owners of land. The extension of commerce, manufactures, and mining, the introduction of the factory system and machinery, the opening of new countries, and the great discoveries and inventions have created a new middle class, based on wealth, and developed out of the peasants, artisans, unskilled laborers, and small shop-keepers of a century ago. The consequence has been that the chance of acquiring capital and all which depends on capital has opened before classes which formerly passed their lives in a dull round of ignorance and drudgery. This chance has brought with it the same alternative which accompanies every other opportunity offered to mortals. Those who were wise and able to profit by the chance succeeded grandly; those who were negligent or unable to profit by it suffered proportionately. The result has been wide inequalities of wealth within the industrial classes. The net result, however, for all, has been the cheapening of luxuries and a vast extension of physical enjoyment. The appetite for enjoyment has been awakened and nourished in classes which formerly never missed what they never thought of, and it has produced eagerness for material good, discontent, and impatient ambition. This is the reverse side of that eager uprising of the industrial classes which is such a great force in modern life. The chance is opened to advance, by industry, prudence, economy, and emigration, to the possession of capital; but the way is long and tedious. The impatience for enjoyment and the thirst for luxury which we have mentioned are the greatest foes to the accumulation of capital; and there is a still darker side to the picture when we come to notice that those who yield to the impatience to enjoy, but who see others outstrip them, are led to malice and envy. Mobs arise which manifest the most savage and senseless disposition to burn and destroy what they cannot enjoy. We have already had evidence, in more than one country, that

such a wild disposition exists and needs only opportunity to burst into activity.

The origin of socialism, which is the extreme development of the sentimental philosophy, lies in the undisputed facts which I described at the outset. The socialist regards this misery as the fault of society. He thinks that we can organize society as we like and that an organization can be devised in which poverty and misery shall disappear. He goes further even than this. He assumes that men have artificially organized society as it now exists. Hence if anything is disagreeable or hard in the present state of society it follows, on that view, that the task of organizing society has been imperfectly and badly performed, and that it needs to be done over again. These are the assumptions with which the socialist starts, and many socialists seem also to believe that if they can destroy belief in an Almighty God who is supposed to have made the world such as it is, they will then have overthrown the belief that there is a fixed order in human nature and human life which man can scarcely alter at all, and, if at all, only infinitesimally.

The truth is that the social order is fixed by laws of nature precisely analogous to those of the physical order. The most that man can do is by ignorance and self-conceit to mar the operation of social laws. The evils of society are to a great extent the result of the dogmatism and self-interest of statesmen, philosophers, and ecclesiastics who in past time have done just what the socialists now want to do. Instead of studying the natural laws of the social order, they assumed that they could organize society as they chose, they made up their minds what kind of a society they wanted to make, and they planned their little measures for the ends they had resolved upon. It will take centuries of scientific study of the facts of nature to eliminate from human society the mischievous institutions and traditions which the said statesmen, philosophers, and ecclesiastics have introduced into it. Let us not, however, even then delude ourselves with any impossible hopes. The hardships of life would not be eliminated if the laws of nature acted directly and without interference. The task of right living forever changes its form, but let us not imagine that that task will ever reach a final solution or that any race of men on this earth can ever be emancipated from the necessity of industry, prudence, continence, and temperance if they are to pass their lives

prosperously. If you believe the contrary you must suppose that some men can come to exist who shall know nothing of old age, disease, and death.

The socialist enterprise of reorganizing society in order to change what is harsh and sad in it at present is therefore as impossible, from the outset, as a plan for changing the physical order. I read the other day a story in which a man dreamt that somebody had invented an application of electricity for eradicating certain facts from the memory. Just think of it! What an emancipation to the human race, if a man could so emancipate himself from all those incidents in his past life which he regrets! Let there no longer be such a thing as remorse or vain regret! It would be half as good as finding a fountain of eternal youth. Or invent us a world in which two and two could make five. Two two-dollar notes could then pay five dollars of debts. They say that political economy is a dismal science and that its doctrines are dark and cruel. I think the hardest fact in human life is that two and two cannot make five; but in sociology while people will agree that two and two cannot make five, yet they think that it might somehow be possible by adjusting two and two to one another in some way or other to make two and two equal to four and one-tenth.

I have shown how men emerge from barbarism only by the use of capital and why it is that, as soon as they begin to use capital, if there is liberty, there will be inequality. The socialist looking at these facts says that it is capital which produces the inequality. It is the inequality of men in what they get out of life which shocks the socialist. He finds enough to criticize in the products of past dogmatism and bad statesmanship to which I have alluded, and the program of reforms to be accomplished and abuses to be rectified which the socialists have set up have often been admirable. It is their analysis of the situation which is at fault. Their diagnosis of the social disease is founded on sectarian assumptions, not on the scientific study of the structure and functions of the social body. In attacking capital they are simply attacking the foundations of civilization, and every socialistic scheme which has ever been proposed, so far as it has lessened the motives to saving or the security of capital, is anti-social and anti-civilizing.

Rousseau, who is the great father of the modern socialism, laid accusation for the inequalities existing amongst men upon wheat and

iron. What he meant was that wheat is a symbol of agriculture, and when men took to agriculture and wheat diet they broke up their old tribal relations, which were partly communistic, and developed individualism and private property. At the same time agriculture called for tools and machines, of which iron is a symbol; but these tools and machines are capital. Agriculture, individualism, tools, capital were, according to Rousseau's ideas, the causes of inequality. He was, in a certain way, correct, as we have already seen by our own analysis of the facts of the social order. When human society reached the agricultural stage machinery became necessary. Capital was far more important than on the hunting or pastoral stage, and the inequalities of men were developed with great rapidity, so that we have a Humboldt, a Newton, or a Shakespeare at one end of the scale and a Digger Indian at the other. The Humboldt or Newton is one of the highest products produced by the constant selection and advance of the best part of the human race, *viz.*, those who have seized every chance of advancing; and the Digger Indian is a specimen of that part of the race which withdrew from the competition clear back at the beginning and has consequently never made any advance beyond the first superiority of man to beasts. Rousseau, following the logic of his own explanation of the facts, offered distinctly as the cure for inequality a return to the hunting stage of life as practiced by the American Indians. In this he was plainly and distinctly right. If you want equality you must not look forward for it on the path of advancing civilization. You may go back to the mode of life of the American Indian, and, although you will not then reach equality, you will escape those glaring inequalities of wealth and poverty by coming down to a comparative equality, that is, to a status in which all are equally miserable. Even this, however, you cannot do without submitting to other conditions which are far more appalling than any sad facts in the existing order of society. The population of Massachusetts is about two hundred to the square mile; on the hunting stage Massachusetts could not probably support, at the utmost, five to the square mile; hence to get back to the hunting stage would cost the reduction of the population to two and a half where there are now one hundred. In Rousseau's day people did not even know that this question of the power of land to support population was to be taken into account.

Socialists find it necessary to alter the definition of capital in order to maintain their attacks upon it. Karl Marx, for instance, regards capital as an accumulation of the differences which a merchant makes between his buying price and his selling price. It is, according to him, an accumulation of the differences which the employer gains between what he pays to the employees for making the thing and what he obtains for it from the consumer. In this view of the matter the capitalist employer is a pure parasite, who has fastened on the wage-receiving employee without need or reason and is levying toll on industry. All socialistic writers follow, in different degrees, this conception of capital. If it is true, why do not I levy on some workers somewhere and steal this difference in the product of their labor? Is it because I am more honest or magnanimous than those who are capitalist-employers? I should not trust myself to resist the chance if I had it. Or again, let us ask why, if this conception of the origin of capital is correct, the workmen submit to a pure and unnecessary imposition. If this notion were true, co-operation in production would not need any effort to bring it about; it would take an army to keep it down. The reason why it is not possible for the first comer to start out as an employer of labor is that capital is a prerequisite to all industry. So soon as men pass beyond the stage of life in which they live, like beasts, on the spontaneous fruits of the earth, capital must precede every productive enterprise. It would lead me too far away from my present subject to elaborate this statement as it deserves and perhaps as it needs, but I may say that there is no sound political economy and especially no correct conception of wages which is not based on a complete recognition of the character of capital as necessarily going before every industrial operation. The reason why co-operation in production is exceedingly difficult, and indeed is not possible except in the highest and rarest conditions of education and culture amongst artisans, is that workmen cannot undertake an enterprise without capital, and that capital always means the fruits of prudence and self-denial already accomplished. The capitalist's profits, therefore, are only the reward for the contribution he has made to a joint enterprise which could not go on without him, and his share is as legitimate as that of the hand-worker.

The socialist assails particularly the institution of bequest or hereditary property, by which some men come into life with special pro-

tection and advantage. The right of bequest rests on no other grounds than those of expediency. The love of children is the strongest motive to frugality and to the accumulation of capital. The state guarantees the power of bequest only because it thereby encourages the accumulation of capital on which the welfare of society depends. It is true enough that inherited capital often proves a curse. Wealth is like health, physical strength, education, or anything else which enhances the power of the individual; it is only a chance; its moral character depends entirely upon the use which is made of it. Any force which, when well used, is capable of elevating a man, will, if abused, debase him in the same proportion. This is true of education, which is often and incorrectly vaunted as a positive and purely beneficent instrumentality. An education ill used makes a man only a more mischievous scoundrel, just as an education well used makes him a more efficient, good citizen and producer. So it is with wealth; it is a means to all the higher developments of intellectual and moral culture. A man of inherited wealth can gain in youth all the advantages which are essential to high culture, and which a man who must first earn the capital cannot attain until he is almost past the time of life for profiting by them. If one should believe the newspapers, one would be driven to a philosophy something like this: it is extremely praiseworthy for a man born in poverty to accumulate a fortune; the reason why he wants to secure a fortune is that he wants to secure the position of his children and start them with better advantages than he enjoyed himself; this is a noble desire on his part, but he really ought to doubt and hesitate about so doing because the chances are that he would do far better for his children to leave them poor. The children who inherit his wealth are put under suspicion by it; it creates a presumption against them in all the activities of citizenship.

Now it is no doubt true that the struggle to win a fortune gives strength of character and a practical judgment and efficiency which a man who inherits wealth rarely gets, but hereditary wealth transmitted from generation to generation is the strongest instrument by which we keep up a steadily advancing civilization. In the absence of laws of entail and perpetuity it is inevitable that capital should speedily slip from the hold of the man who is not fit to possess it, back into the great stream of capital, and so find its way into the hands of those who can use it for the benefit of society.

The love of children is an instinct which, as I have said before, grows stronger with advancing civilization. All attacks on capital have, up to this time, been shipwrecked on this instinct. Consequently the most rigorous and logical socialists have always been led sooner or later to attack the family. For, if bequest should be abolished, parents would give their property to their children in their own lifetime; and so it becomes a logical necessity to substitute some sort of communistic or socialistic life for family life, and to educate children in masses without the tie of parentage. Every socialistic theory which has been pursued energetically has led out to this consequence. I will not follow up this topic, but it is plain to see that the only equality which could be reached on this course would be that men should be all equal to each other when they were all equal to swine.

Socialists are filled with the enthusiasm of equality. Every scheme of theirs for securing equality has destroyed liberty. The student of political philosophy has the antagonism of equality and liberty constantly forced upon him. Equality of possession or of rights and equality before the law are diametrically opposed to each other. The object of equality before the law is to make the state entirely neutral. The state, under that theory, takes no cognizance of persons. It surrounds all, without distinctions, with the same conditions and guarantees. If it educates one, it educates all—black, white, red, or yellow; Jew or Gentile; native or alien. If it taxes one, it taxes all, by the same system and under the same conditions. If it exempts one from police regulations in home, church, and occupation, it exempts all. From this statement it is at once evident that pure equality before the law is impossible. Some occupations must be subjected to police regulation. Not all can be made subject to militia duty even for the same limited period. The exceptions and special cases furnish the chance for abuse. Equality before the law, however, is one of the cardinal principles of civil liberty, because it leaves each man to run the race of life for himself as best he can. The state stands neutral but benevolent. It does not undertake to aid some and handicap others at the outset in order to offset hereditary advantages and disadvantages, or to make them start equally. Such a notion would belong to the false and spurious theory of equality which is socialistic. If the state should attempt this it would make itself the servant of envy. I am entitled to make the most I can of myself without hin-

drance from anybody, but I am not entitled to any guarantee that I shall make as much of myself as somebody else makes of himself.

The modern thirst for equality of rights is explained by its historical origin. The mediæval notion of rights was that rights were special privileges, exemptions, franchises, and powers given to individuals by the king; hence each man had just so many as he and his ancestors had been able to buy or beg by force or favor, and if a man had obtained no grants he had no rights. Hence no two persons were equal in rights and the mass of the population had none. The theory of natural rights and of equal rights was a revolt against the mediæval theory. It was asserted that men did not have to wait for a king to grant them rights; they have them by nature, or in the nature of things, because they are men and members of civil society. If rights come from nature, it is inferred that they fall like air and light on all equally. It was an immense step in advance for the human race when this new doctrine was promulgated. Its own limitations and errors need not now be pointed out. Its significance is plain, and its limits are to some extent defined when we note its historical origin.

I have already shown that where these guarantees exist and where there is liberty, the results cannot be equal, but with all liberty there must go responsibility. If I take my own way I must take my own consequences; if it proves that I have made a mistake, I cannot be allowed to throw the consequences on my neighbor. If my neighbor is a free man and resents interference from me he must not call on me to bear the consequences of his mistakes. Hence it is plain that liberty, equality before the law, responsibility, individualism, monogamy, and private property all hold together as consistent parts of the same structure of society, and that an assault on one part must sooner or later involve an assault on all the others.

To all this must be added the political element in socialism. The acquisition of some capital—the amount is of very subordinate importance—is the first and simplest proof that an individual possesses the industrial and civil virtues which make a good citizen and a useful member of society. Political power, a century ago, was associated more or less, even in the United States, with the possession of land. It has been gradually extended until the suffrage is to all intents and purposes universal in North and South America, in Australia, and in all Europe except Russia and Turkey. On this system political con-



trol belongs to the numerical majority, limited only by institutions. It may be doubted, if the terms are taken strictly and correctly, whether the non-capitalists outnumber the capitalists in any civilized country, but in many cities where capital is most collected they certainly do. The powers of government have been abused for ages by the classes who possessed them to enable kings, courtiers, nobles, politicians, demagogues, and their friends to live in exemption from labor and self-denial, that is, from the universal lot of man. It is only a continuation of the same abuse if the new possessors of power attempt to employ it to secure for themselves the selfish advantages which all possessors of power have taken. Such a course would, however, overthrow all that we think has been won in the way of making government an organ of justice, peace, order, and security, without respect of persons; and if those gains are not to be lost they will have to be defended, before this century closes, against popular majorities, especially in cities, just as they had to be won in a struggle with kings and nobles in the centuries past.

The newest socialism is, in its method, political. The essential feature of its latest phases is the attempt to use the power of the state to realize its plans and to secure its objects. These objects are to do away with poverty and misery, and there are no socialistic schemes yet proposed, of any sort, which do not, upon analysis, turn out to be projects for curing poverty and misery by making those who have share with those who have not. Whether they are paper-money schemes, tariff schemes, subsidy schemes, internal improvement schemes, or usury laws, they all have this in common with the most vulgar of the communistic projects, and the errors of this sort in the past which have been committed in the interest of the capitalist class now furnish precedents, illustration, and encouragement for the new category of demands. The latest socialism divides into two phases: one which aims at centralization and despotism—believing that political form more available for its purposes; the other, the anarchical, which prefers to split up the state into townships, or “communes,” to the same end. The latter furnishes the true etymology and meaning of “communism” in its present use, but all socialism, in its second stage, merges into a division of property according to the old sense of communism.

It is impossible to notice socialism as it presents itself at the pres-

ent moment without pointing out the immense mischief which has been done by sentimental economists and social philosophers who have thought it their professional duty, not to investigate and teach the truth, but to dabble in philanthropy. It is in Germany that this development has been most marked, and as a consequence of it the judgment and sense of the whole people in regard to political and social questions have been corrupted. It is remarkable that the country whose learned men have wrought so much for every other science, especially by virtue of their scientific method and rigorous critical processes, should have furnished a body of social philosophers without method, discipline, or severity of scholarship, who have led the nation in pursuit of whims and dreams and impossible desires. Amongst us there has been less of it, for our people still possess enough sterling sense to reject sentimental rubbish in its grosser forms, but we have had and still have abundance of the more subtle forms of socialistic doctrine, and these open the way to the others. We may already see the two developments forming a congenial alliance. We have also our writers and teachers who seem to think that "the weak" and "the poor" are terms of exact definition; that government exists, in some especial sense, for the sake of the classes so designated; and that the same classes (whoever they are) have some especial claim on the interest and attention of the economist and social philosopher. It may be believed that, in the opinion of these persons, the training of men is the only branch of human effort in which the labor and care should be spent, not on the best specimens but on the poorest.

It is a matter of course that a reactionary party should arise to declare that universal suffrage, popular education, machinery, free trade, and all the other innovations of the last hundred years are all a mistake. If anyone ever believed that these innovations were so many clear strides towards the millennium, that they involve no evils or abuses of their own, that they tend to emancipate mankind from the need for prudence, caution, forethought, vigilance—in short, from the eternal struggle against evil—it is not strange that he should be disappointed. If anyone ever believed that some "form of government" could be found which would run itself and turn out the pure results of abstract peace, justice, and righteousness without any trouble to anybody, he may well be dissatisfied. To talk of turn-

ing back, however, is only to enhance still further the confusion and danger of our position. The world cannot go back. Its destiny is to go forward and to meet the new problems which are continually arising. Under our so-called progress evil only alters its forms, and we must esteem it a grand advance if we can believe that, on the whole, and over a wide view of human affairs, good has gained a hair's breadth over evil in a century. Popular institutions have their own abuses and dangers just as much as monarchical or aristocratic institutions. We are only just finding out what they are. All the institutions which we have inherited were invented to guard liberty against the encroachments of a powerful monarch or aristocracy, when these classes possessed land and the possession of land was the greatest social power. Institutions must now be devised to guard civil liberty against popular majorities, and this necessity arises first in regard to the protection of property, the first and greatest function of government and element in civil liberty. There is no escape from any dangers involved in this or any other social struggle save in going forward and working out the development. It will cost a struggle and will demand the highest wisdom of this and the next generation. It is very probable that some nations—those, namely, which come up to this problem with the least preparation, with the least intelligent comprehension of the problem, and under the most inefficient leadership—will suffer a severe check in their development and prosperity; it is very probable that in some nations the development may lead through revolution and bloodshed; it is very probable that in some nations the consequence may be a reaction towards arbitrary power. In every view we take of it, it is clear that the general abolition of slavery has only cleared the way for a new social problem of far wider scope and far greater difficulty. It seems to me, in fact, that this must always be the case. The conquest of one difficulty will only open the way to another; the solution of one problem will only bring man face to face with another. Man wins by the fight, not by the victory, and therefore the possibilities of growth are unlimited, for the fight has no end.

The progress which men have made in developing the possibilities of human existence has never been made by jumps and strides. It has never resulted from the schemes of philosophers and reformers. It has never been guided through a set program by the wisdom of any sages,

statesmen, or philanthropists. The progress which has been made has been won in minute stages by men who had a definite task before them, and who have dealt with it in detail, as it presented itself, without referring to general principles, or attempting to bring it into logical relations to an *a priori* system. In most cases the agents are unknown and cannot be found. New and better arrangements have grown up imperceptibly by the natural effort of all to make the best of actual circumstances. In this way, no doubt, the new problems arising in our modern society must be solved or must solve themselves. The chief safeguard and hope of such a development is in the sound instincts and strong sense of the people, which, although it may not reason closely, can reject instinctively. If there are laws—and there certainly are such—which permit the acquisition of property without industry, by cunning, force, gambling, swindling, favoritism, or corruption, such laws transfer property from those who have earned it to those who have not. Such laws contain the radical vice of socialism. They demand correction and offer an open field for reform because reform would lie in the direction of greater purity and security of the right of property. Whatever assails that right, or goes in the direction of making it still more uncertain whether the industrious man can dispose of the fruits of his industry for his own interests exclusively, tends directly towards violence, bloodshed, poverty, and misery. If any large section of modern society should rise against the rest for the purpose of attempting any such spoliation, either by violence or through the forms of law, it would destroy civilization as it was destroyed by the irruption of the barbarians into the Roman Empire.

The sound student of sociology can hold out to mankind, as individuals or as a race, only one hope of better and happier living. That hope lies in an enhancement of the industrial virtues and of the moral forces which thence arise. Industry, self-denial, and temperance are the laws of prosperity for men and states; without them advance in the arts and in wealth means only corruption and decay through luxury and vice. With them progress in the arts and increasing wealth are the prime conditions of an advancing civilization which is sound enough to endure. The power of the human race to-day over the conditions of prosperous and happy living are sufficient to banish poverty and misery if it were not for folly and vice. The earth does

not begin to be populated up to its power to support population on the present stage of the arts; if the United States were as densely populated as the British Islands, we should have 1,000,000,000 people here. If, therefore, men were willing to set to work with energy and courage to subdue the outlying parts of the earth, all might live in plenty and prosperity. But if they insist on remaining in the slums of great cities or on the borders of an old society, and on a comparatively exhausted soil, there is no device of economist or statesman which can prevent them from falling victims to poverty and misery or from succumbing in the competition of life to those who have greater command of capital. The socialist or philanthropist who nourishes them in their situation and saves them from the distress of it is only cultivating the distress which he pretends to cure.

#### COMMENT BY

#### FREDERICK C. MILLS

IN the mind of the man who wrote this essay was a picture of a harsh, exacting nature, enforcing a bitter struggle for the meager goods available to humankind. To him the laws of individual and social existence were simple and rigorous. Rewards and punishments are meted out with impartial justice. Property, the enjoyment of family life, health, social preference go to the fit, while poverty, disease, and starvation are the lot of the unfit. Unrelenting nature, working under a system of complete liberty, will reward virtue and punish vice and error. Extreme inequalities will exist in a social system thus created, but the inequalities will correspond precisely with the just deserts of all members of society. This picture derives from the *laissez faire* of classical English economics (given form, to Sumner, by Harriet Martineau's embarrassingly faithful translations into everyday terms) and the doctrine of evolution through natural selection.

This study belongs to an era when moral philosophy was identified with social science. We are dealing here with the work of an essayist, not of a scientist. Sumner's list of the facts of human life is not buttressed by evidence as to the actual manner in which capital is ac-

cumulated and property utilized, nor is it based on study of the actual incidence of poverty, disease, and starvation. Our present knowledge of the processes of capital creation, of the effects of technical advance on the productivity of labor, of the role of environment in shaping behavior patterns and determining mortality rates would lead us to question many of Sumner's "facts." Nor do "laws" of individual and social existence derived by the ingenuous transference to human affairs of generalizations tentatively advanced by nineteenth-century students of biological evolution find general acceptance today.

The reader of this essay, in the year 1940, may find it extreme, dogmatic, unscientific. He may reject most of Sumner's assumptions and many of his conclusions. Yet this sermon of Sumner the essayist and preacher may not, perhaps, be altogether dismissed by our generation, with our craving for guaranteed security, governmental control, socialized protection. The conditions of individual and social survival may not be those that Sumner set forth. Indeed, we may not be able today to define these conditions with any accuracy. But training in the home, self-discipline, prudence, the ability to create things of value and to conserve and make wise use of property—these and other simple virtues extolled by Sumner perhaps still have survival value. If they do not, it is at least comforting to believe that they do.

## THE FAMILY MONOPOLY<sup>1</sup>

**I**N the current discussions about property, rights, and social relations, it is very rare to see any appreciation manifested of the connection between the family and property. Yet this connection lies at the root of the whole matter. The grandest and most powerful monopoly in the world is the family, in its monogamic form; we have sects which have perceived this and made it an object of their agitation. They are not large, and, for obvious reasons, they are regarded with suspicion and abhorrence by respectable people; but it is undeniable that when they inveigh against monogamic marriage as monopoly, and against the monogamic family as the hotbed of selfishness, they have facts to support their position which are as true and as much to the point as any of the current denunciations of monopoly and selfishness in reference to capital and the industrial system.

I beg the reader to note carefully the form and limits of the statement which I have just made. The parallel which I affirm is not rhetorical, it is in the essence of the facts; when I say that one set of assertions are as well grounded as the other, the force and point of the assertion lie in the "just as much as." Both are correct as to the facts in a certain measure and way; both are fallacious as they are ordinarily asserted and employed. It is not easy to deal with the matter from the side of the family within the proper restrictions, but the necessity of a better popular understanding of the general subject is so great that I am compelled to try it.

Speaking from the standpoint of social science, I hold monogamy to be the greatest step in the history of civilization. This opinion is, it is true, treated by some sociologists with ridicule; I, however, make bold to hold it and to believe that the present generation is not more false to its interests in any other respect than in its inadequate and distorted conception of what the monogamic family yet needs in the way of perfection and sanctity. I use the last term also with distinct intention, meaning thereby that religion has no higher function, in modern society, than to maintain all its institutional effect on marriage and the family.

1. *The Independent*, May 10, 1888.

The specific influence of the family is exerted on women and on children. The monogamic wife is the only wife who shares the life of her husband. Some other kinds of wives are greater than their husbands, and some are lower; the monogamic wife alone can have an independent and co-ordinate sphere, on an equal footing with her husband, yet different from his sphere. The children of a monogamic marriage alone have that home life, that atmosphere of affection and care, which produces the best human beings. They alone get true education; for it does not come from books and schools, it comes from tireless watching, patient training, persistent restraint and encouragement, at the fire-side and at all moments of life, weaving a tissue of unconscious habit into the fiber of the life of the future men and women.

This is, undoubtedly, an ideal, but it is not an ideal which floats in the air as a poetic vision alone. It is realized often enough and sufficiently in our observation for us to know that it can be, and is.

Monogamic marriage, however, is a great monopoly. It is grand and noble for those who get into it, but like other monopolies, it wins an advantage for those who are included at the cost of depression to those who are excluded; and millions, of course, in trying to attain to the heights of a monogamic marriage, fail. If they fall, they fall far lower than they would be under lower forms of marriage. The children of a monogamic family have a far better chance than those of any other form of the family, provided the monogamic family realizes approximately its own theory; but it is not impossible that the children reared in a Turkish harem may have a happier fate than the children of a monogamic household in which the parents quarrel or are divorced.

The monogamic family evidently owes its strength and value, then, to the fact that it constitutes a close and solid unit with greater internal cohesion than any other form of the family, and more complete severance externally from every other unit. Its exclusiveness is of its essence; it exerts an intenser educating power on its members on account of its distinctness and comparative isolation. Accordingly any form of communal life, any higher development of social relations, as in hotel life in this country, or in the case of fashionable life, where the attention of the parents is occupied outside of the



family, causes the family life, the domestic influences, and the family education to suffer.

The people who, just now, are captivated by any "altruistic" notion cannot decide whether the family is to be included in the sphere of the selfish or the altruistic. Their quandary has its good causes in the facts of the case. The selfish and the altruistic sentiments are inextricably interwoven, and their interlacings or common ground lie in the family sphere; but the family institution, the isolated family group, as a unit, sharply severed and highly and distinctly developed against all other family units, is, in fact, the hotbed of those sentiments which are denounced as selfish—above all such of them as are connected with social rank and property.

The facts are open to the observation of all. "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune." If you intensify his family affection, you will in the same degree absorb his energies in the determination to redeem those pledges. If, therefore, the growth of social institutions is in the direction of monogamy, if we thereby win a better position for women and a better education for children, we also intensify a man's feeling of cohesion with his own wife and his own children, aside from and against all the world; and his and their interests, while more absolutely identified with each other, are set in more complete indifference or more pronounced antagonism to those of other people than any other social arrangement. This consequence is inevitable and it plainly exists. The sentiments which are nowadays jumbled together under the head of "individualism," in accordance with the general confusion and looseness with which all these matters are treated, are, in fact, products of this family sentiment.

The selfishest man in the world will pour out his money like water on his children. A man who fights all the world with pitiless energy in the industrial conflict, will show himself benevolent to his family. It is for them that he fights. A man of fifty, alone in the world, might feel indifferent about the accumulation of wealth, or look with comparative indifference upon the danger of monetary loss, but a similar man, with a family dependent upon him, is eager to win wealth, or is overwhelmed by anxiety at the danger of loss. It is not for themselves that men in middle life work; it is for wives and children.

I, therefore, agree perfectly with the socialists as to the facts of the case. They have always recognized the fact that property and

the family are inextricably interwoven with each other from their very roots in the remotest origin of civilization. The more logical they are the more fearlessly they follow out this fact, and attack the family in order to succeed in their attack on property. It is to be conceded to them, at least, that they can see facts and estimate their significance, while the sentimentalists and semi-socialists only muddle everything. The issue is a plain one, and one which admits of no compromise whatever: property and the family stand or fall together; we must either maintain them both with the individualists, or overthrow them both with the socialists.

The people who talk about rooting out monopoly will never succeed in their undertaking until they root out that family monopoly which alone gives significance to all the others. It may be that in some abstract sense the earth was given to all mankind. What I want is a piece of it with which to support my family. When I get it (which I must do by going on until I find unoccupied land, or by a peaceful contract with some one already holding a monopoly, unless I propose to kill a monopolist family in order to put mine in its place) I shall want it as a monopoly, that is, I shall want to be sure that my children, and not any other man's, will eat the crop. There will, therefore, be "private property in land" there and I shall have no need of the "state," unless the state means simply that my neighbors will join with me in a mutual assurance that we can each guarantee the existence of our families by the monopoly of our land.

#### COMMENT BY

*NORMAN THOMAS*

**P**ROFESSOR SUMNER and those Socialists of the period at whom his article on the family was directed could meet head-on in collision, because they shared the same mistaken viewpoints.

First they assumed, consciously or unconsciously, that the monogamous family was almost exclusively the creation of a certain set of economic interests. As a matter of fact, the economic support for the family, as a unit, has been extraordinarily weakened by techno-

logical and other developments since they wrote. This, quite irrespective of whether the families in question accept capitalism or socialism! If one believes in the monogamous family, as I do, it must be for reasons among which the peculiar adequacy of the family as an economic unit is relatively far weaker than it was even at the end of the nineteenth century.

On the other hand, technological progress has made it far more possible for all families to have their own homes, their own kitchens if they so desire, their own gardens, etc., without hurtful economic waste, than some nineteenth-century observers believed.

Secondly, modern socialism is concerned, not with abolishing private property, but in the better and more adequate production and distribution of the right kinds of private property to all men. The right of men and women to have and enjoy their own family, their own homes, their own comforts, etc., is by no means inconsistent, but rather consistent, with proper economic planning for the conquest of poverty and exploitation. There is therefore no psychological compulsion to constrain the believer in the monogamous family to believe also in all the property concepts of nineteenth-century capitalism. Indeed, one may forcibly argue that there would be more and better monogamous families if private monopoly or quasi monopoly did not take possession of so much of the mineral wealth and of the great aggregations of machinery necessary to the common good.

## *THE ABSURD EFFORT TO MAKE THE WORLD OVER<sup>1</sup>*

**I**T will not probably be denied that the burden of proof is on those who affirm that our social condition is utterly diseased and in need of radical regeneration. My task at present, therefore, is entirely negative and critical: to examine the allegations of fact and the doctrines which are put forward to prove the correctness of the diagnosis and to warrant the use of the remedies proposed.

The propositions put forward by social reformers nowadays are chiefly of two kinds. There are assertions in historical form, chiefly in regard to the comparison of existing with earlier social states, which are plainly based on defective historical knowledge, or at most on current stock historical dicta which are uncritical and incorrect. Writers very often assert that something never existed before because they do not know that it ever existed before, or that something is worse than ever before because they are not possessed of detailed information about what has existed before. The other class of propositions consists of dogmatic statements which, whether true or not, are unverifiable. This class of propositions is the pest and bane of current economic and social discussion. Upon a more or less superficial view of some phenomenon a suggestion arises which is embodied in a philosophical proposition and promulgated as a truth. From the form and nature of such propositions they can always be brought under the head of "ethics." This word at least gives them an air of elevated sentiment and purpose, which is the only warrant they possess. It is impossible to test or verify them by any investigation or logical process whatsoever. It is therefore very difficult for anyone who feels a high responsibility for historical statements, and who absolutely rejects any statement which is unverifiable, to find a common platform for discussion or to join issue satisfactorily in taking the negative.

When anyone asserts that the class of skilled and unskilled manual laborers of the United States is worse off now in respect to diet, clothing, lodgings, furniture, fuel, and lights; in respect to the age at

1. *Forum*, March, 1894, XVII, 92-102.

which they can marry; the number of children they can provide for; the start in life which they can give to their children, and their chances of accumulating capital, than they ever have been at any former time, he makes a reckless assertion for which no facts have been offered in proof. Upon an appeal to facts, the contrary of this assertion would be clearly established. It suffices, therefore, to challenge those who are responsible for the assertion to make it good.

If it is said that the employed class are under much more stringent discipline than they were thirty years ago or earlier, it is true. It is not true that there has been any qualitative change in this respect within thirty years, but it is true that a movement which began at the first settlement of the country has been advancing with constant acceleration and has become a noticeable feature within our time. This movement is the advance in the industrial organization. The first settlement was made by agriculturists, and for a long time there was scarcely any organization. There were scattered farmers, each working for himself, and some small towns with only rudimentary commerce and handicrafts. As the country has filled up, the arts and professions have been differentiated and the industrial organization has been advancing. This fact and its significance has hardly been noticed at all; but the stage of the industrial organization existing at any time, and the rate of advance in its development, are the absolutely controlling social facts. Nine-tenths of the socialistic and semi-socialistic, and sentimental or ethical, suggestions by which we are overwhelmed come from failure to understand the phenomena of the industrial organization and its expansion. It controls us all because we are all in it. It creates the conditions of our existence, sets the limits of our social activity, regulates the bonds of our social relations, determines our conceptions of good and evil, suggests our life-philosophy, molds our inherited political institutions, and reforms the oldest and toughest customs, like marriage and property. I repeat that the turmoil of heterogeneous and antagonistic social whims and speculations in which we live is due to the failure to understand what the industrial organization is and its all-pervading control over human life, while the traditions of our school of philosophy lead us always to approach the industrial organization, not from the side of objective study, but from that of philosophical doctrine. Hence it is that we find that the method of measuring what we see happening by what are

called ethical standards, and of proposing to attack the phenomena by methods thence deduced, is so popular.

The advance of a new country from the very simplest social co-ordination up to the highest organization is a most interesting and instructive chance to study the development of the organization. It has of course been attended all the way along by stricter subordination and higher discipline. All organization implies restriction of liberty. The gain of power is won by narrowing individual range. The methods of business in colonial days were loose and slack to an inconceivable degree. The movement of industry has been all the time toward promptitude, punctuality, and reliability. It has been attended all the way by lamentations about the good old times; about the decline of small industries; about the lost spirit of comradeship between employer and employee; about the narrowing of the interests of the workman; about his conversion into a machine or into a "ware," and about industrial war. These lamentations have all had reference to unquestionable phenomena attendant on advancing organization. In all occupations the same movement is discernible—in the learned professions, in schools, in trade, commerce, and transportation. It is to go on faster than ever, now that the continent is filled up by the first superficial layer of population over its whole extent and the intensification of industry has begun. The great inventions both make the intension of the organization possible and make it inevitable, with all its consequences, whatever they may be. I must expect to be told here, according to the current fashions of thinking, that we ought to control the development of the organization. The first instinct of the modern man is to get a law passed to forbid or prevent what, in his wisdom, he disapproves. A thing which is inevitable, however, is one which we cannot control. We have to make up our minds to it, adjust ourselves to it, and sit down to live with it. Its inevitableness may be disputed, in which case we must re-examine it; but if our analysis is correct, when we reach what is inevitable we reach the end, and our regulations must apply to ourselves, not to the social facts.

Now the intensification of the social organization is what gives us greater social power. It is to it that we owe our increased comfort and abundance. We are none of us ready to sacrifice this. On the contrary, we want more of it. We would not return to the colonial

simplicity and the colonial exiguity if we could. If not, then we must pay the price. Our life is bounded on every side by conditions. We can have this if we will agree to submit to that. In the case of industrial power and product the great condition is combination of force under discipline and strict coordination. Hence the wild language about wage-slavery and capitalistic tyranny.

In any state of society no great achievements can be produced without great force. Formerly great force was attainable only by slavery aggregating the power of great numbers of men. Roman civilization was built on this. Ours has been built on steam. It is to be built on electricity. Then we are all forced into an organization around these natural forces and adapted to the methods or their application; and although we indulge in rhetoric about political liberty, nevertheless we find ourselves bound tight in a new set of conditions, which control the modes of our existence and determine the directions in which alone economic and social liberty can go.

If it is said that there are some persons in our time who have become rapidly and in a great degree rich, it is true; if it is said that large aggregations of wealth in the control of individuals is a social danger, it is not true.

The movement of the industrial organization which has just been described has brought out a great demand for men capable of managing great enterprises. Such have been called "captains of industry." The analogy with military leaders suggested by this name is not misleading. The great leaders in the development of the industrial organization need those talents of executive and administrative skill, power to command, courage, and fortitude, which were formerly called for in military affairs and scarcely anywhere else. The industrial army is also as dependent on its captains as a military body is on its generals. One of the worst features of the existing system is that the employees have a constant risk in their employer. If he is not competent to manage the business with success, they suffer with him. Capital also is dependent on the skill of the captain of industry for the certainty and magnitude of its profits. Under these circumstances there has been a great demand for men having the requisite ability for this function. As the organization has advanced, with more impersonal bonds of coherence and wider scope of operations, the value of this functionary has rapidly increased. The possession of the

requisite ability is a natural monopoly. Consequently, all the conditions have concurred to give to those who possessed this monopoly excessive and constantly advancing rates of remuneration.

Another social function of the first importance in an intense organization is the solution of those crises in the operation of it which are called the conjuncture of the market. It is through the market that the lines of relation run which preserve the system in harmonious and rhythmical operation. The conjuncture is the momentary sharper misadjustment of supply and demand which indicates that a redistribution of productive effort is called for. The industrial organization needs to be insured against these conjunctures, which, if neglected, produce a crisis and catastrophe; and it needs that they shall be anticipated and guarded against as far as skill and foresight can do it. The rewards of this function for the bankers and capitalists who perform it are very great. The captains of industry and the capitalists who operate on the conjuncture, therefore, if they are successful, win, in these days, great fortunes in a short time. There are no earnings which are more legitimate or for which greater services are rendered to the whole industrial body. The popular notions about this matter really assume that all the wealth accumulated by these classes of persons would be here just the same if they had not existed. They are supposed to have appropriated it out of the common stock. This is so far from being true that, on the contrary, their own wealth would not be but for themselves; and besides that, millions more of wealth, many-fold greater than their own, scattered in the hands of thousands, would not exist but for them.

Within the last two years I have traveled from end to end of the German Empire several times on all kinds of trains. I reached the conviction, looking at the matter from the passenger's standpoint, that, if the Germans could find a Vanderbilt and put their railroads in his hands for twenty-five years, letting him reorganize the system and make twenty-five million dollars out of it for himself in that period, they would make an excellent bargain.

But it is repeated until it has become a commonplace which people are afraid to question, that there is some social danger in the possession of large amounts of wealth by individuals. I ask, Why? I heard a lecture two years ago by a man who holds perhaps the first chair of political economy in the world. He said, among other things,



that there was great danger in our day from great accumulations; that this danger ought to be met by taxation, and he referred to the fortune of the Rothschilds and to the great fortunes made in America to prove his point. He omitted, however, to state in what the danger consisted or to specify what harm has ever been done by the Rothschild fortunes or by the great fortunes accumulated in America. It seemed to me that the assertions he was making, and the measures he was recommending, *ex-cathedra*, were very serious to be thrown out so recklessly. It is hardly to be expected that novelists, popular magazinists, amateur economists, and politicians will be more responsible. It would be easy, however, to show what good is done by accumulations of capital in a few hands—that is, under close and direct management, permitting prompt and accurate application; also to tell what harm is done by loose and unfounded denunciations of any social component or any social group. In the recent debates on the income tax the assumption that great accumulations of wealth are socially harmful and ought to be broken down by taxation was treated as an axiom, and we had direct proof how dangerous it is to fit out the average politician with such unverified and unverifiable dogmas as his warrant for his modes of handling the direful tool of taxation.

Great figures are set out as to the magnitude of certain fortunes and the proportionate amount of the national wealth held by a fraction of the population, and eloquent exclamation-points are set against them. If the figures were beyond criticism, what would they prove? Where is the rich man who is oppressing anybody? If there was one, the newspapers would ring with it. The facts about the accumulation of wealth do not constitute a plutocracy, as I will show below. Wealth, in itself considered, is only power, like steam, or electricity, or knowledge. The question of its good or ill turns on the question how it will be used. To prove any harm in aggregations of wealth it must be shown that great wealth is, as a rule, in the ordinary course of social affairs, put to a mischievous use. This cannot be shown beyond the very slightest degree, if at all.

Therefore, all the allegations of general mischief, social corruption, wrong, and evil in our society must be referred back to those who make them for particulars and specifications. As they are offered to us we cannot allow them to stand, because we discern in them

faulty observation of facts, or incorrect interpretation of facts, or a construction of facts according to some philosophy, or misunderstanding of phenomena and their relations, or incorrect inferences, or crooked deductions.

Assuming, however, that the charges against the existing "capitalistic"—that is, industrial—order of things are established, it is proposed to remedy the ill by reconstructing the industrial system on the principles of democracy. Once more we must untangle the snarl of half ideas and muddled facts.

Democracy is, of course, a word to conjure with. We have a democratic-republican political system, and we like it so well that we are prone to take any new step which can be recommended as "democratic" or which will round out some "principle" of democracy to a fuller fulfillment. Everything connected with this domain of political thought is crusted over with false historical traditions, cheap philosophy, and undefined terms, but it is useless to try to criticize it. The whole drift of the world for five hundred years has been toward democracy. That drift, produced by great discoveries and inventions, and by the discovery of a new continent, has raised the middle class out of the servile class. In alliance with the crown they crushed the feudal classes. They made the crown absolute in order to do it. Then they turned against the crown and, with the aid of the handicraftsmen and peasants, conquered it. Now the next conflict which must inevitably come is that between the middle capitalist class and the proletariat, as the word has come to be used. If a certain construction is put on this conflict, it may be called that between democracy and plutocracy, for it seems that industrialism must be developed into plutocracy by the conflict itself. That is the conflict which stands before civilized society to-day. All the signs of the times indicate its commencement, and it is big with fate to mankind and to civilization.

Although we cannot criticize democracy profitably, it may be said of it, with reference to our present subject, that up to this time democracy never has done anything, either in politics, social affairs, or industry, to prove its power to bless mankind. If we confine our attention to the United States, there are three difficulties with regard to its alleged achievements, and they all have the most serious bearing on the proposed democratization of industry.

1. The time during which democracy has been tried in the United

States is too short to warrant any inferences. A century or two is a very short time in the life of political institutions, and if the circumstances change rapidly during the period the experiment is vitiated.

2. The greatest question of all about American democracy is whether it is a cause or a consequence. It is popularly assumed to be a cause, and we ascribe to its beneficent action all the political vitality, all the easiness of social relations, all the industrial activity and enterprise which we experience and which we value and enjoy. I submit, however, that, on a more thorough examination of the matter, we shall find that democracy is a consequence. There are economic and sociological causes for our political vitality and vigor, for the ease and elasticity of our social relations, and for our industrial power and success. Those causes have also produced democracy, given it success, and have made its faults and errors innocuous. Indeed, in any true philosophy, it must be held that in the economic forces which control the material prosperity of a population lie the real causes of its political institutions, its social class-adjustments, its industrial prosperity, its moral code, and its world-philosophy. If democracy and the industrial system are both products of the economic conditions which exist, it is plainly absurd to set democracy to defeat those conditions in the control of industry. If, however, it is not true that democracy is a consequence, and I am well aware that very few people believe it, then we must go back to the view that democracy is a cause. That being so, it is difficult to see how democracy, which has had a clear field here in America, is not responsible for the ills which Mr. Bellamy and his comrades in opinion see in our present social state, and it is difficult to see the grounds of asking us to intrust it also with industry. The first and chief proof of success of political measures and systems is that, under them, society advances in health and vigor and that industry develops without causing social disease. If this has not been the case in America, American democracy has not succeeded. Neither is it easy to see how the masses, if they have undertaken to rule, can escape the responsibilities of ruling, especially so far as the consequences affect themselves. If, then, they have brought all this distress upon themselves under the present system, what becomes of the argument for extending the system to a direct and complete control of industry?

3. It is by no means certain that democracy in the United States

has not, up to this time, been living on a capital inherited from aristocracy and industrialism. We have no pure democracy. Our democracy is limited at every turn by institutions which were developed in England in connection with industrialism and aristocracy, and these institutions are of the essence of our system. While our people are passionately democratic in temper and will not tolerate a doctrine that one man is not as good as another, they have common sense enough to know that he is not; and it seems that they love and cling to the conservative institutions quite as strongly as they do to the democratic philosophy. They are, therefore, ruled by men who talk philosophy and govern by the institutions. Now it is open to Mr. Bellamy to say that the reason why democracy in America seems to be open to the charge made in the last paragraph, of responsibility for all the ill which he now finds in our society, is because it has been infected with industrialism (capitalism); but in that case he must widen the scope of his proposition and undertake to purify democracy before turning industry over to it. The socialists generally seem to think that they make their undertakings easier when they widen their scope, and make them easiest when they propose to remake everything; but in truth social tasks increase in difficulty in an enormous ratio as they are widened in scope.

The question, therefore, arises, if it is proposed to reorganize the social system on the principles of American democracy, whether the institutions of industrialism are to be retained. If so, all the virus of capitalism will be retained. It is forgotten, in many schemes of social reformation in which it is proposed to mix what we like with what we do not like, in order to extirpate the latter, that each must undergo a reaction from the other, and that what we like may be extirpated by what we do not like. We may find that instead of democratizing capitalism we have capitalized democracy—that is, have brought in plutocracy. Plutocracy is a political system in which the ruling force is wealth. The denunciation of capital which we hear from all the reformers is the most eloquent proof that the greatest power in the world to-day is capital. They know that it is, and confess it most when they deny it most strenuously. At present the power of capital is social and industrial, and only in a small degree political. So far as capital is political, it is on account of political abuses, such as tariffs and special legislation on the one hand and legislative strikes on the

other. These conditions exist in the democracy to which it is proposed to transfer the industries. What does that mean except bringing all the power of capital once for all into the political arena and precipitating the conflict of democracy and plutocracy at once? Can anyone imagine that the masterfulness, the overbearing disposition, the greed of gain, and the ruthlessness in methods, which are the faults of the master of industry at his worst, would cease when he was a functionary of the State, which had relieved him of risk and endowed him with authority? Can anyone imagine that politicians would no longer be corruptly fond of money, intriguing, and crafty when they were charged, not only with patronage and government contracts, but also with factories, stores, ships, and railroads? Could we expect anything except that, when the politician and the master of industry were joined in one, we should have the vices of both unchecked by the restraints of either? In any socialistic state there will be one set of positions which will offer chances of wealth beyond the wildest dreams of avarice; *viz.*, on the governing committees. Then there will be rich men whose wealth will indeed be a menace to social interests, and instead of industrial peace there will be such war as no one has dreamed of yet: the war between the political ins and outs—that is, between those who are on the committee and those who want to get on it.

We must not drop the subject of democracy without one word more. The Greeks already had occasion to notice a most serious distinction between two principles of democracy which lie at its roots. Plutarch says that Solon got the archonship in part by promising equality, which some understood of esteem and dignity, others of measure and number. There is one democratic principle which means that each man should be esteemed for his merit and worth, for just what he is, without regard to birth, wealth, rank, or other adventitious circumstances. The other principle is that each one of us ought to be equal to all the others in what he gets and enjoys. The first principle is only partially realizable, but, so far as it goes, it is elevating and socially progressive and profitable. The second is not capable of an intelligible statement. The first is a principle of industrialism. It proceeds from and is intelligible only in a society built on the industrial virtues, free endeavor, security of property, and repression of the baser vices; that is, in a society whose industrial sys-

tem is built on labor and exchange. The other is only a rule of division for robbers who have to divide plunder or monks who have to divide gifts. If, therefore, we want to democratize industry in the sense of the first principle, we need only perfect what we have now, especially on its political side. If we try to democratize it in the sense of the other principle, we corrupt politics at one stroke; we enter upon an industrial enterprise which will waste capital and bring us all to poverty, and we set loose greed and envy as ruling social passions.

If this poor old world is as bad as they say, one more reflection may check the zeal of the headlong reformer. It is at any rate a tough old world. It has taken its trend and curvature and all its twists and tangles from a long course of formation. All its wry and crooked gnarls and knobs are therefore stiff and stubborn. If we puny men by our arts can do anything at all to straighten them, it will only be by modifying the tendencies of some of the forces at work, so that, after a sufficient time, their action may be changed a little and slowly the lines of movement may be modified. This effort, however, can at most be only slight, and it will take a long time. In the meantime spontaneous forces will be at work, compared with which our efforts are like those of a man trying to deflect a river, and these forces will have changed the whole problem before our interferences have time to make themselves felt. The great stream of time and earthly things will sweep on just the same in spite of us. It bears with it now all the errors and follies of the past, the wreckage of all the philosophies, the fragments of all the civilizations, the wisdom of all the abandoned ethical systems, the debris of all the institutions, and the penalties of all the mistakes. It is only in imagination that we stand by and look at and criticize it and plan to change it. Everyone of us is a child of his age and cannot get out of it. He is in the stream and is swept along with it. All his sciences and philosophy come to him out of it. Therefore the tide will not be changed by us. It will swallow up both us and our experiments. It will absorb the efforts at change and take them into itself as new but trivial components, and the great movement of tradition and work will go on unchanged by our fads and schemes. The things which will change it are the great discoveries and inventions, the new reactions inside the social organism, and the changes in the earth itself on account of changes in the

cosmical forces. These causes will make of it just what, in fidelity to them, it ought to be. The men will be carried along with it and be made by it. The utmost they can do by their cleverness will be to note and record their course as they are carried along, which is what we do now, and is that which leads us to the vain fancy that we can make or guide the movement. That is why it is the greatest folly of which a man can be capable, to sit down with a slate and pencil to plan out a new social world.

## COMMENT BY

*FRANK H. HANKINS*

AS one reads this essay he must be struck by its timeliness. Occasioned by one great depression it is still applicable after forty-six years to another and more enduring one. Times have meanwhile changed in many important respects. The programs of the evolutionary Socialists of the Nineties have largely become law, but the basic issues remain much the same. That is, the issue is still that between a basically middle-class conception of democratic institutions and a basically proletarian conception, though the advances of the latter have shifted the battle line. There are indications that Sumner foresaw these advances. On the basis of an endorsement of the "economic interpretation of history" that any Marxist would approve, he foresaw the continued integration of the nation's economic organization; and he foresaw that this would "inevitably" involve a "restriction of liberty," a "stricter subordination and higher discipline." Being inevitable, this trend could not be controlled; rather we must adapt to it. Hence the "wild language about wage-slavery and capitalistic tyranny" is futile.

At this point Sumner makes no reference to the really central issue of where the final control should be placed in a highly integrated social order. "Liberty is obedience to law," as the motto over a New England courthouse asserts, but a lot depends on who make the laws. Now, there are four major types of control over an industrial society: (1) by capitalists; (2) by proletarians; (3) by capital and

labor jointly; and (4) by government. These are respectively the theories of Capitalist Individualism, Bolshevism, Coöperation, and State Socialism. Sumner seems to conceive of control only by "captains of industry," whom he later praises. Since his day there has been a decided shift toward (4), with increasing attachment to (2). However, it is implicit in the Sumnerian philosophy that criticism of such trends is, as he says later in this essay of his own criticism of democracy, "futile." As he contended in the *Folkways*, what is right is what the mores make right; and they can make anything right. I agree. One may add that for various reasons found in the readjustments of the social forces operating in our complex industrialism, the mores have shifted away from that sublime attachment to the postulates of capitalist individualism so characteristic of many great social philosophers of the past century. If we end in dictatorship, our descendants will doubtless find "sound moral reasons" why that is the best of all possible social arrangements.

Most of the rest of the essay constitutes a defense of the rich man and an attack on the folklore of democracy and socialism. The argument here is dogmatic but clever and in places seems a bit disingenuous. To say that "democracy has never done anything to prove its power to bless mankind" is somewhat overbearing, especially when made with no definition of terms and little argument. In fact, he seems to me to have missed the main support for the theory of individualism when he argues that democracy is an effect of economic changes but in no discernible way a cause of economic advances. On the contrary, it would seem that the truly enormous increase in wealth during the past century has been due largely to that individual liberty which the democratic political revolutions emphasized. By implication Sumner himself endorses this view in his praises for the captains of industry and the financial speculators; he might have put in a word for the inventors and other innovators. Moreover, the chief argument against more socialism is not that graft, greed, lust of power, and intrigue would flourish, though that is important, but rather that it would dampen the ardor of effort, reduce the incentives to research, invention, and efficiency, and change the basis of social preferment from proven merit in a competitive struggle to political plausibility.

Then, I think, Sumner's strong endorsement of the economic inter-



pretation would, today, need some qualification. Nothing has been more pronounced throughout the post-war world than the dominance of economics by politics. All sorts of sentimental political considerations, nationalistic, racial, and ideological, have held sway over the cool rationality of economic advantages. Business has become the football of the politicians. In the terminology more familiar in his day than in ours, political power has tended to move from the classes to the masses. This has been due in part to the huge immigration which began shortly after Sumner wrote this essay. From them and from our share croppers and tenant farmers has been derived a growing mass of proletarians who through organization and group consciousness have become more and more vocal in politics. At the same time scientific management and technological improvements have made the unskilled worker less and less important in the industrial activities of the country. This mass, however, has votes and large families that must be cared for. Perhaps the most momentous change in our social structure during forty-six years has been this increasing power of the proletarian, rich in children but poor in aught else; and this is in large part a consequence of the differential fertility of the various social strata.

The basic issue raised by this essay, however, is the question whether society can direct its own evolution. We have the rise and fall of a dozen past civilizations and the current trends in Russia, Germany, and Italy to raise serious doubts as to whether we can surely make "progress" continuously. Sumner expresses the main reason for this when he says: "Everyone of us is a child of his age and cannot get out of it. He is in the stream and is swept along with it. All his sciences and his philosophy come to him out of it." There are, no doubt, causal processes operating here, but we understand them only slightly. Even if we understood them thoroughly we should not necessarily have the power to control them so as to produce predetermined effects. As Spencer said, the unexpected effects of social action usually exceed the expected effects. In a democracy the difficulties are multiplied because the final decisions do not rest with "all-wise philosophers" but with the mass of voters; and they have little historical perspective and even less knowledge of the intricacies of the social mechanisms they pretend to manipulate.

Finally, supposing we had extensive knowledge of social causes and

power to control them, we should still have to determine the kind of society we should strive for. Can anyone presume to say with dogmatic assurance what the goal of the human epic should be? Each of us must answer in terms of his own scheme of values. Our mores will answer for us; but the mores change slowly in obedience to the necessities of adjustment to a slowly changing world. We cannot foresee the long-time effects of future discoveries and inventions; nor the violent disturbances in world affairs of shifting national power; nor the meteor-like careers of great historical personages whose vaulting ambitions and charismatic influence seem at times to alter fundamentally the very mores themselves. On the contrary, we wrestle from day to day with the current problems as they arise; and both the problems and their pretended solutions are given us by the flowing stream of culture of which both we and they are parts. Thus it is that "liberals" hasten the end of our liberties; that, under the guise of promoting the general welfare the production of wealth is impeded; that, under solicitude for the poor all are made poorer, lest a few be rich; that "good" men often do great harm; and that the New Deal, which promised brilliant solutions of many problems, seems likely to be superseded by a Newer Deal, though the problems will still remain.

But if this view is sound, why should Sumner have been so stalwart in his defense of Capitalist Individualism? He knew it would pass and that its passing was inevitable. Is it possible that much of his thinking also was merely a verbalization of the emotional set derived from the mores amidst which he was reared?

#### COMMENT BY

*H. L. MENCKEN*

**I**RONY drips from the title of this modest but memorable essay, now, after forty-six years, reprinted once more. It would be hard to imagine it falling into a time more in need of it—or less likely to get anything useful out of it. Never in all human history has mankind given greater faith and confidence to the prehensile messiahs that Sumner denounces, and never have they carried on in so bold and saucy a way. Some of the greatest of civilized nations—for example,

Italy, Germany, and the United States, to say nothing of Russia—have yielded to them in a fashion both innocent and delirious, and there is every indication that the current series of wars will see them triumphant almost everywhere else. Even in Latin America what Dr. Scott Nearing calls social engineers have begun to afflict the native anthropoids, and even in France and Japan, both extremely backward countries by the dominant metaphysic, they are kept down only by the diligence of the police. England itself, I predict formally, will have an Ickes before the present uproar is over, with a Wallace or a Harry Hopkins to pass him the instruments. Humanity is in process of being saved on a super-colossal scale, with music by Offenbach.

How Sumner himself would have reacted to this spectacle I can't say with any authority, for I never had the honor of communing with him. But I guess by his writings that he would have bust out with something excessively tart, and maybe even subversive. He was well aware of the perils lurking in the democratic hallucination, and he'd certainly have been disturbed by their wholesale realization in this great Republic. I can well imagine his commentary upon the dozen or more schemes of Farm Relief that have been tried since the New Deal began to save us, and upon such imbecile adventures as the Federal Writers' Project, and upon the degradation of the Free Trade dogma at the hands of the ineffable Hull. But now he is an angel in Heaven, and the hollering, if any, is left to lesser men. My prediction is that it will be as vain as the murmuring of Iokanaan in Herod's rain barrel. We are in for salvation in the grand manner, with no hold barred.

#### COMMENT BY

*GEORGE E. VINCENT*

**T**HIS is the gospel according to Sumner pure and undefiled. The essentials are: an evolving industrial system determines activities, institutions, philosophies, ethical standards; untrammelled competition in open markets supplies automatic regulation; great fortunes are not a menace, but a means of progress; captains of industry and commerce are indispensable and worth what they get; democracy

is a consequence, not a cause, and is still on trial; conscious efforts to plan new social systems are contrary to human nature and the nature of society.

One wonders whether what has happened in recent years would have modified Sumner's views, if he had lived on. Would he be quite so sure that governmental intervention is never justified? Would his faith in the unhampered control by captains of industry be at all shaken? Would he be so fully convinced that the private management of railways is always alert, farseeing, and enterprising? Would he insist that public efforts to relieve unemployment are a mistake?

It is a good guess that Sumner would be severely critical of recent tendencies in social legislation. He would doubtless censure individuals and groups for reckless and dishonest conduct, but he would oppose most efforts to pass laws about it. He would insist that people should try to understand the inevitable workings of the industrial order, and then adopt measures which are in harmony with them. He would oppose and deride all "isms" and ideologies.

To many Sumner's philosophy may seem cold, hard, unsympathetic. It is true that he intensely disliked what he regarded as sloppy thinking and sentimentality. He was incisive, and dogmatic. His assertions were often too sweeping and unqualified. Yet his insistence on fundamental realities which cannot be safely ignored was of value in his own time, and may still be profitably considered in these days of turmoil and perplexity.

## PURPOSES AND CONSEQUENCES<sup>1</sup>

**T**HE observation that motives and purposes have nothing to do with consequences is a criterion for distinguishing between the science of society and the views, whims, ideals, and fads which are current in regard to social matters, but especially for distinguishing between socialism and sociology. Motives and purposes are in the brain and heart of man. Consequences are in the world of fact. The former are infected by human ignorance, folly, self-deception, and passion; the latter are sequences of cause and effect dependent upon the nature of the forces at work. When, therefore, a man acts, he sets forces in motion, and the consequences are such as those forces produce under the conditions existing. They are entirely independent of any notion, will, wish, or intention in the mind of any man or men. Consequences are facts in the world of experience. If one man discharges a gun at another and kills him, he may say afterwards that he "did not know that it was loaded." He did not mean to kill. The consequences remain; they are such as follow from the structure of a gun, the nature of explosives, and the relative adjustment of the men and the things. Of course this proposition is so simple and obvious that no demonstration can add to it. Why is there any such thing as wisdom, unless there is a distinction between a correct and an incorrect apprehension of existing conditions and of the effects which certain forces will produce? How could anybody ever make a "mistake" if his purposes would determine the consequences of his acts? Why should we try to get experience of life and to know how to act under given circumstances, unless it is because the causes and effects will follow their own sequences and we, instead of controlling them by our mental operations, are sure to be affected by them in our interests and welfare? Why, in short, is there any need of education if things in this world will follow our motives and purposes—since education aims to inform us of the order of things in this world to which we are subject?

Since consequences are entirely independent of motives and purposes, ethics have no application to consequences. Ethics apply only

1. Written sometime between 1900 and 1906.

to motives and purposes. This is why the whole fashion, which is now so popular and which most people think so noble, of mixing ethics into economics and politics, is utterly ignorant and mischievous. All policies are deliberate choices of series of acts; whether we wish good or ill, when we choose our acts, is of no importance. The only important thing is whether we know what the conditions are and what will be the effects of our acts. To act from notions, pious hopes, benevolent intentions, or ideals is sentimentalism, because the mental states and operations lack basis in truth and reality. Policies, therefore, which have not been tested by all the criteria which science provides are not to be discussed at all. Somebody's notion that they would work well and give us a gain, or that there is great need of them, because he thinks he sees a great evil at present, are no grounds of action for sober-minded men. The protective tariff is a case, so far as it is a policy of prosperity. The silver policy which was urged in 1896 and 1900 was another example. We live in the midst of a mass of illustrations of the fact that laws do not produce the consequences which the legislator intended. They give rise to other consequences, such, namely, as the forces which they set in operation, under the conditions which exist, necessarily produce.

Acts of the legislature work on the cupidity, envy, and ambition of men; as soon as a law is passed each man affected by it takes his attitude to it. Mass phenomena result from the concurrent action of many. What results is what must result from the actions, acting as causes, under the conditions; if the actions are of a certain kind, institutions are undermined, men are miseducated, the public conscience is corrupted, false standards are set up; frivolity, idleness, love of pleasure, sycophancy, will become traits of the society. That the legislator intended to promote education, temperance, industry, and purity is entirely aside from the case. In 1899 the press of the United States constantly reiterated the assertion that the motives of the United States in the war with Spain were noble, humanitarian, and ethical, and that it never entered into expectation that the Philippine Islands were to come into our possession. All this was entirely idle; when a war is begun it will run its course and bring its consequences. What the intention was makes no difference. This, of course, is the reason why no serious statesman will enter upon a war if he can help it, or will ever engage in an adventurous policy, that is,

a policy whose course and consequences are not open to his view so far as the utmost training and effort of human reason will enable him to see.

Whenever any policy is adopted, all the consequences of it must be accepted—those which are unwelcome as well as those which are welcome. This works both ways, for there are good consequences of an evil policy as well as bad consequences of a good policy. It is clear, however, that in the adoption of a policy the considerations which should be taken into account are those which are deduced from the conditions existing and from the relations of cause and effect in the world of experience. They are not ethical at all, and the introduction of ethical notions or dogmas can never do anything but obscure the study of the facts and relations which alone should occupy attention.

The explanation of the popular confusion between motives and consequences is easy. We men are daily compelled to act. We cannot desist from activity. Therefore we have to make decisions and go forward. Hence, in our judgment of each other, if the acts turn out to have evil consequences, we have to grant excuse and indulgence to each other, if the intention was honest and the motive pure. It is no doubt necessary and right so to do, but that does not affect the reality of the consequences or the suffering and loss attendant upon them. Therefore we turn back to our educational operations, and to science, in order to learn more about the world of fact and the play of forces in it, for what we want is, not to judge or excuse each other, but to avoid suffering and loss.

Here, then, is the great gulf between all the sentimental, ethical, humanitarian, and benevolent views about social matters and the scientific view of the same. The former start out from some mental states or emotions produced by impressions from occurrences; the latter starts out from the desire to know the truth about facts and relations in the world of experience. In all the dictionaries definitions of socialism are given which try to express the sense of socialism in terms of the pious hope or benevolent intention by which socialists claim to be animated. All these definitions appear to be colored by a desire on the part of the persons who made them to give definitions which would be satisfactory to socialists. The definitions are substantially alike. Not one of them contains an idea; that is to say, not one of them expresses a true definition, if by a definition is under-

stood the expression in language of a single complete and well-rounded concept. An aspiration for better things is common to all philosophies and systems; it is not a definition of any one. It is a diffused sentiment and nothing more. These definitions, however, are all true to the reality of the case in one respect; they are all attempts to bring within the compass of a formula what is really a nebulous state of mind with respect to the phenomena of human society. The only positive characteristic of this state of mind is that it is one of disapproval and dislike. The suggestion of contrast with some other phenomena which would be approved and liked is, of course, a dispersion of thought to the infinite variety of subjective phantasms which might float in the imagination of an indefinite number of men. The point is, for the present purpose, that all this belongs on the side of motives, purposes, hopes, intentions, ideals, and has nothing to do with realities, forces, laws, consequences, facts, conditions, relations. The science of society finds its field in exploring the latter; it has nothing at all to do with the former. This is why it is true, although socialists are annoyed by the assertion, that socialism is not a subject for discussion by serious students of the science of society. An economist or sociologist who discusses socialism is like a physicist who discusses Jules Verne's novels. He does not prove his own breadth of mind; he proves that he does not understand the domain of his own vocation.

Poetry and other forms of the fine arts express sentiments, states of mind, and emotional reactions on experience. As new stimuli they affect the imagination and produce new states of thought and emotion. For the greatest part their effect is dissipated and exhausted in these subjective experiences, not without residual effect on character. As motives of action, these impulses of the emotions produced by artistic devices do not stand in good repute in the experience of mankind. Why? Because they contain no knowledge or foresight, and therefore no guarantee of consequences. It belongs to education to train men and women to criticize and withstand impulses of this class. Pictures of scenes or objects, instead of inciting to action, ought to act upon an educated person as warnings to distrust the influence to which he is exposed. It is not possible to cross-examine a picture, even if it is a photograph.

A good education would, in a similar manner, teach its pupils to



resist the magnetism of a crowd and the seductions of popularity. When a crowd, of which one is a member, are enthused with a common sentiment and purpose, it is impossible to resist the influence of it. Hence the well-known fact that men who act in a crowd often look back later in astonishment at their own actions; they cannot understand how they came to participate in the things which were done. Education ought to train us so that when we are in a crowd which is being swept away by a motive, we should refuse to join, and should instead go away to think over the probable consequences. In like manner popularity, which seems now to be the grand standard of action, is always to be distrusted. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." That is the time to take warning that you are probably going astray. It is very smooth and easy to run with the current and it involves no responsibility for the consequences. Who then will consider the consequences? They will come. All our reason, study, science, and education are turned to scorn and ridicule if popularity is a proper and adequate motive of action.

In fact the judgment of probable consequences is the only real and sound ground of action. It is because men have been ignorant of the probable consequences, or have disregarded them, that human history presents such a picture of the devastation and waste of human energy and of the wreck of human hopes. If there is any salvation for the human race from woe and misery it is in knowledge and in training to use knowledge. Every investigation of the world in which we live is an enlargement of our power to judge of probable consequences when cases arise in which we shall be compelled to act. The difference between motives and consequences, therefore, is seen to be a gulf between the most divergent notions of human life and of the way to deal with its problems. It is most essential that all of us who believe in the scientific view of life and its problems should extricate ourselves completely from the trammels of the sentimental view, and should understand the antagonism between them, for the sentimental view has prevailed in the past and we live now in a confusion between the two.

It is a still more positive vice to act from an intention to attain ideals. Ideals are necessarily phantasms. They have no basis in fact. Generally ideals are formed under the stress of difficulty along the hard road of positive endeavor. Then the imagination takes wing and,

disregarding conditions and forces, revels in constructions which are not limited by anything.<sup>2</sup> The ideal for mankind would be to have material supplies without limit and without labor and to reproduce without care or responsibility. Minor ideals are but details or fractions which are not worth attention. If ideals have any power or value, it is as easy to use them for the whole as for any part. Dogmatic ideals like perfect liberty, justice, or equality, especially if economic and not political liberty, justice, and equality are meant, can never furnish rational or scientific motives of action or starting-points for rational effort. They never can enter into scientific thinking since they admit of no analysis and can be tested by no canons of truth. They have no footing in reality. Anybody who says that "we want to build a republic of educated labor" is not defining a rational program of action. He is only manufacturing turgid phrases. He who says that the state "ought to balance the motives of interest and benevolence" is not contributing to any sober discussion. He is talking nonsense, since an analysis of "state," "interest," and "benevolence" would cause the proposition to fall into contradictions and absurdities. The vice and fallacy of this way of looking at things is that it assumes that men can by thinking things call them into being; or that men can add by thinking to the existing conditions some element which is not in them.<sup>3</sup> All who talk about the "power of ideas" are more or less under this fallacy. It is a relic of the sympathetic magic of savage men. Serious study of human society shows us that we can never do anything but use and develop the opportunities which are offered to us by the conditions and conjunctures of the moment.

Other motives of action are derived from the authoritative or dogmatic precepts of some sect of philosophy or religion. These are what is commonly called ethics. In the ordinary course of life it is best and is necessary that for most of us, and for all of us most of the time, these current rules of action which are traditional and accepted in our society should be adopted and obeyed. This is true, however, only because it is impossible for nearly all of us to investigate for ourselves and win personal convictions, and it is impossible for any of us to do so except in a few special matters. Nevertheless,

2. Gumplowicz, L., *Staatsidee*, p. 188; *Soziologie und Politik*, p. 110.

3. Ratzenhofer, G., *Die Soziologische Erkenntnis*, p. 365.

all this sets out only in so much clearer light the pre-eminent value of science, because science extends, over the whole domain of human experience, a gradually wider and wider perception of those relations of man to earth and man to man on which human welfare depends. Science is investigation of facts by sound methods, and deduction of inferences by sound processes. The further it goes the more it enlightens us as to consequences which must ensue if acts are executed by which things and men are brought into the relations which science has elucidated. At the present moment civilized society stands at a point in the development of the applications of science to human interests, at which the thing of the highest importance is the subjection of societal phenomena to scientific investigation, together with the elimination of metaphysics from this entire domain.

## COMMENT BY

*EUGENE MEYER*

SUMNER'S essay on "Purposes and Consequences," written during the first years of this century, remains a superb guide to action. Indeed, its value was never greater than it is today. It should be read and reread by those in a position of responsibility, not least by legislators, molders of public opinion, and those occupying administrative posts in the government.

In that essay Sumner points out that the world has been plagued by good intentions since time immemorial and that much of human misery arises out of such good intentions because motives and purposes have nothing to do with consequences. It is only the ability to judge probable consequences which furnishes a sound basis for action, he rightly concludes.

The catastrophic state of the present world order offers abundant proofs of the profound cleavage which exists between purposes and consequences. During the ten years preceding the outbreak of the present war, for instance, the democracies of Europe held firmly to the noble purpose of remaining at peace, and at almost any cost.

The direct consequence of that policy was to bring on the very evil the democratic statesmen had sought to avert. And when the conflict broke out their countries found themselves tragically unprepared. They had made an idealistic love of peace rather than a clear-eyed recognition of realities their guide of action. The very nobility of their motives prevented the democracies from becoming fully aware, until almost the very last, that a whole new set of facts existed, of a particularly brutal and challenging sort. They are now paying for this idealism with blood, destruction, and untold agony.

Nor are we in this country in a position to throw stones at the overseas democracies. Our neutrality policy, our successive neutrality laws, have the same idealistic purpose as that which governed the international policies of Great Britain and France for so long. We, too, have acted on the utterly false assumption that worthwhile purposes are enough to achieve noble ends. And the same basic fallacy has only too often been apparent in the sphere of American domestic policy, as well.

Many members of the present Administration seem singularly unaware of the gap which exists between good intentions and desirable consequences. In fact, some of our leading officials have gone to the extreme of capitalizing the Administration's undoubtedly virtuous purposes as a political asset, apparently on the assumption that if the purposes are good the consequences will and must be equally good. They have failed to realize that, as Sumner points out, an idealistic statesman with inadequate experience of the facts can be a disaster for a nation.

So ardent, indeed, is the belief of members of the present Administration in motive as the be-all and end-all of policy, that critics, however objective, are not infrequently dismissed as unworthy of a hearing simply by having their motives labeled as base. This dangerously subjective approach to the intricate problems of government was exemplified recently in the discussion which arose over the Secretary of Agriculture's plan to combine the Agricultural Credit Agencies with the crop program of the Department. The criticism of the move produced the answering charge that it emanated from malicious people, unfriendly to the welfare of the farmer, and, therefore, could be ruled out without the necessity of further discussion. No real at-

tempt was made objectively to examine the facts that were presented or the ideas that were put forth. Yet, as a matter of fact, those against whom the Secretary of Agriculture inveighed for the alleged baseness of their motives included some of the most important agricultural organizations of irreproachable character with a long and intimate knowledge of the facts. It is sometimes practically impossible to convey to some of our high officials the point in Sumner's argument that experience with fact is more important than pious purposes.

Sumner's warning is of tremendous timeliness: "It is because men have been ignorant of the probable consequences, or have disregarded them, that human history presents such a picture of the devastation and waste of human energy and of the wreck of human hopes. If there is any salvation for the human race from woe and misery it is in knowledge and in training to use knowledge."

"It is a still more positive vice," he said, going as was his wont straight to the point, "to act from an intention to attain ideals. Ideals are necessarily phantasms. They have no basis in fact. . . . Dogmatic ideals like perfect liberty, justice, or equality, especially if economic and not political liberty, justice, and equality are meant, can never furnish rational or scientific motives of action or starting points for rational effort."

When Sumner early in the century considered the processes of action in relation to those of idealistic thinking, the country was smaller and the movement of economic forces was much slower than it is today. With the vast expansion of our economic life and the rapid acceleration of social developments, planning based upon knowledge and experience rather than exclusively upon pious purposes is even more necessary than in his day.

To anyone like myself who has lived in Washington for the past twenty-five years and has watched the processes of government both from the inside and the outside, the main problem facing our nation resolves itself more and more into finding men who are fitted by training and experience to deal with our extensive, highly geared, swiftly moving social and economic machinery. If science—a pragmatic knowledge of consequences as the basis of action—as Sumner defines it, is to determine decisions, then we must get men into the government who have both theoretical learning and knowledge based

upon experience in the world affairs as well as the ability to correlate the two.

Unfortunately, our theorists too frequently lack practical experience, and our men of affairs often lack the understanding that springs from theoretical study. But even admitting that the nation is obviously not bereft of men equipped with these indispensable and self-supplementary kinds of experience, how are we to get them into high government positions? Cabinet officials are seldom if ever chosen with any regard for Sumner's standards or even with any recognition of the necessity for such standards.

Moreover, when Sumner was doing his thinking and writing, the United States was able, or seemed to be able, to think out and implement its national policies largely without reference to those of other nations. It could put well-considered thought into action and had the time to modify actions according to the consequences observed. To-day our policies must be made and remade in relation to a world moving with lightning rapidity in ways that cannot be ignored when we formulate our domestic policies. Thus the problem of our national leadership and methods of finding it are of crucial importance if our country is to be governed successfully with intelligence and efficiency in that wholly new kind of world which has sprung into being.

Better ways than the traditional political manner of selecting cabinet and other high officials must be devised in order to put into positions of power men suited to the complex demands of the times. Sumner's insistence upon action that conforms to the facts, implies a demand for people who have training in objective observation of facts and the ability to make wise decisions based upon knowledge strengthened by previous experience.

Our government is embarking at the present writing upon a program of military preparedness. Economic and social preparedness are just as essential, in fact national defense needs cannot be considered without them. The first problem in such a program involves the necessity of finding adequate personnel to carry out these vast and many-faceted preparations. Our government must pursue with determination a policy to put in command men of character, training, and intelligence who, as Sumner puts it, know how to "use and develop the opportunities which are offered to us by the conditions and conjunctures of the moment."

## COMMENT BY

WILLIAM F. OGBURN

SUMNER'S essay entitled "Purposes and Consequences" is a very good illustration of the reason why his was a powerful voice in the cause of science in societal affairs. To understand it, however, we must go back to the turn of the century. Then, as in the preceding century, much social thought was dominated by the idea that divine purpose ruled the social universe and that right would prevail. Hence it was assumed that the important thing was to be motivated by noble ideals, and the consequences would inevitably be good. Sumner felt very keenly the shallowness of this type of thought. He thundered against it, in language not softened by any qualifications.

Sumner's meaning is clear if we recall the age in which he wrote. But if we see his language in the setting of 1940 only, he may be misunderstood by readers who are familiar with only the current ideas. Thus when he says, "Since consequences are entirely independent of motives and purposes, ethics have no application to consequences," he is likely to be misunderstood by students of modern psychology with the current emphasis on "drives." This point, that ideas must be seen in their social setting, is being particularly well oriented now by Mannheim's work in the sociology of knowledge.

A student of today, freed from the anthropomorphic idea of purpose in the universe, is more likely to summarize the issue as follows. A scientist makes a poison gas. Whatever may be his motives as a human being, as a scientist he is interested only in making a technically efficient discovery. Whether the gas is used for killing human beings or parasites on fruit trees is a problem of values. Similarly a scientific propagandist is interested in utilizing human emotions to produce a technically efficient result. Whether this efficient technique is used to stir up hatred to war against a defenseless neutral, or to inculcate in us a desire for nutrition based on proper mineral and vitamin balance, is a question of values.

This modern view is in part a result of the work of Sumner a half century ago.

## THE SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE OF MIND<sup>1</sup>

LET us begin by trying to establish a definite idea of what science is. The current uses of the term are both very strict and very loose or vague. Some people use the term as a collective term for the natural sciences; others define science as orderly knowledge. Professor Karl Pearson, in his *Grammar of Science*,<sup>2</sup> does not offer any definition of science, but he tells the aim of science and its function.

"The classification of facts and the formation of absolute judgments upon the basis of this classification—judgments independent of the idiosyncrasies of the individual mind—is peculiarly the *scope and method of modern science*. The scientific man has above all things, to strive at self-elimination in his judgments, to provide an argument which is as true for each individual mind as for his own. *The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance is the function of science*, and the habit of forming a judgment upon those facts unbiased by personal feeling is characteristic of what we shall term the scientific frame of mind." These statements we may gladly accept so far as they go, but they are not definitions of science.

I should want to make the definition of science turn upon the *method* employed, and I would propose as a definition: knowledge of reality acquired by methods which are established in the confidence of men whose occupation it is to investigate truth. In Pearson's book, he refers constantly to the opinions and methods of scientific scholars as the highest test of truth. I know of no better one; I know of none which we employ as constantly as we do that one; and so I put it in the definition. I propose to define science as knowledge of reality because "truth" is used in such a variety of senses. I do not know whether it is possible for us ever to arrive at a knowledge of "the truth" in regard to any important matters. I doubt if it is possible. It is not important. It is the pursuit of truth which gives us life, and it is to that pursuit that our loyalty is due.

1. Address to initiates of the Sigma Xi Society, Yale University, on Mar. 4, 1905.

2. P. 6.



What seems to me most important is that we should aim to get knowledge of realities, not of phantasms or words. By a phantasm I mean a mental conception which is destitute of foundation in fact, and of relations to the world of the senses. In the Middle Ages all men pursued phantasms; their highest interest was in another world which was a phantasm, and they were anxious about their fate in that world. They tried to provide for it by sacraments and rites which were fantastic in their form, and in their assumed relation to the desired end. They built up a great church corporation and endowed it with a large measure of control of human affairs so that it could provide for welfare in the other world. It had special functions which were fantastic with reference to the end which they were to accomplish because they contained no rational connection between means and ends. All the societal power which the church did not have was given to the Emperor, because in a certain text of Scripture mention was made of "two swords." The historical period was spent in a war between the Pope and the Emperor to see which should rule the other. The Crusades were an attempt to realize a great phantasm. Chivalry and the devotion to women were phantasms. The societal system was unreal; it assumed that men were originally in a state of slavery and that all rights which they had were due to gift from some sovereign. It resulted that only two men in the world, the Pope and the Emperor, had original and independent rights. The relation of classes, parties, and corporations in the society was therefore both loose and complicated. It is amazing to notice the effect of all this attention to unrealities on all the products of the Middle Ages. People had no idea of reality. Their poetry dealt with arbitrary inventions and demanded of the reader that he should accept tiresome conventions and stereotyped forms. They formed ideas of Cathay such as we meet with in the Arabian Nights, and they were ready to believe that there might be, in Cathay, any animal form which anybody's imagination could conceive, and any kind of a human figure, for instance, one with a countenance on the elbows or the knees. Theologians quarreled about whether Jesus and his disciples abjured property and lived by beggary, and whether the blood which flowed from the side of Jesus remained on earth or was taken up to heaven with him. The most noticeable fact is that all the disputants were ready to go to the stake, or to put the other party to the stake, according as either should

prove to have the power. It was the rule of the game as they understood it and played it. It was another striking manifestation of the temper of the times that within a few days after the capture of Antioch, the poets in the several divisions of the successful army began to write the history of the conflict, not according to facts, but each glorifying the great men of his own group by ascribing to them great deeds such as the current poetry ascribed to legendary heroes. What could more strikingly show the absence of any notion of historic reality?

Now, if you compare our world of ideas with that of the Middle Ages, the greatest difference is that we want *reality* beyond everything else. We do not demand the truth because we do not know where or how to get it. We do not want rationalism, because that is only a philosophy, and it has limitations like any other philosophy. We do not demand what is natural or realistic in the philosophical sense, because that would imply a selection of things, in operation all the time, before the things were offered to us. In zoology and anthropology we want to know all forms which really exist, but we have no patience with invented and imaginary forms. In history we do not allow documents to be prepared which will serve a purpose; to us, such documents would have the character of lies. That they would be edifying or patriotic does not excuse them. Probably modern men have no harder task than the application of the historic sense to cases in those periods of history when it was not thought wrong to manufacture such documents as one's cause required.

The modern study of nature has helped to produce this way of looking at things, and the way of looking at things has made science possible. I want to have the notion of science built on this thirst for reality, and respond to it at every point. There may be knowledge of reality whose utility we do not know, but it would be overbold for any one to say that any knowledge of reality is useless.

Since our ancestors devoted so much attention to phantasms and left us piles of big books about them, one great department of science must be criticism, by which we discern between the true and the false. There is one historical case of this requirement which always rises before my mind whenever I think of the need of criticism—that is witch-persecution. Although the church had a heavy load of blame for this frightful abuse, yet the jurists were more to blame. As to the

church also, the Protestants, especially the Puritans of Scotland, were as bad as the Roman Catholics. Witch-persecution is rooted in demonism, which is the oldest, widest, and most fundamental form of religion. Whenever religion breaks down there is always produced a revival of demonism. The developments of it may be traced from early Chaldæa. It was believed that demons and women fell in love and begot offspring. Nightmare, especially in the forms experienced on mountains, led to notions of midnight rides, and Walpurgis-Nacht assemblies; then the notion of obscene rites was added. It was believed that witches could provoke great storms and convulsions of nature; all remarkable instances of calamity or good luck, especially if it affected one or a few, were ascribed to them. Especially hail-storms and tornadoes, which sometimes destroy crops over a very limited area, but spare all the rest, were thought to be their work. It was believed that they could transfer good crops from their neighbors' fields to their own. Here we see how phantasms grow. The bulls of popes summed up and affirmed the whole product as fact. Then, too, all the apparatus of pretended investigation and trial which the Inquisition had developed was transferred to the witch-trials. As women chiefly were charged with witchcraft, the result was that all this accumulation of superstition, folly, and cruelty was turned against them. If we try to form an idea of the amount of suffering which resulted, our hearts stand still with horror.

Now there are some strong reasons for the faith in witchcraft. Everybody believed that witches existed, that they could enter into contracts with demons, and could get supernatural aid to carry out their purposes in this world. All the accused witches believed this. It was held to be wicked to make use of witches or demons, but it was believed that there were possible ways of accomplishing human purposes by employing them. Consequently when men or women wanted wealth, or office, or honor, or great success, or wanted to inspire love, or to gratify hate, envy, and vengeance, or wanted children, or wanted to prevent other people from having children, this way was always supposed to be open. No doubt very many of them tried it, at least in homely and silly ways—when put to the torture they confessed it. Then, too, somnambulism, dreams, and nightmare took forms which ran on the lines of popular superstition, and many a woman charged with witchcraft did not know but she had been guilty of it to some extent and without conscious knowledge. Again, the

Scripture argument for demonism and witchcraft was very strong. It was this pitfall which caught the Protestants; how could they deny that there are any witches when the Bible says: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Witches were persons who had gone over to the side of Satan and his hosts in their war on God; they were enemies of the human race. The deductions from the primary fantastic notion of demons were all derived on direct and indisputable lines, and those deductions ruled the thought of Christian Europe for five hundred years.

What was wanted to put a stop to the folly and wickedness was criticism. The case shows us that we men, including the greatest and best of us, may fall at any time under the dominion of such a mania, unless we are trained in methods of critical thinking. A series of great sceptics from Montaigne to Voltaire met the witch doctrines with scorn and derision. They were not afraid to deny the existence of demons. It appears also that the so-called common-sense of the crowd revolted at the absurdities of witchcraft. Every person who was executed as a witch named, under torture, others, who were then arrested, tortured, and executed; each of these named others, and so the witch-judges found that they were driven on, by judicial execution of the most cruel form, to depopulate a whole territory. It was a critical revolt when they saw this construction of their own conduct and turned against it. When we read the story we are amazed that good and honest men could have gone on for centuries inflicting torture of the extremist kind on old women without the bit of critical reflection which should have led them to ask themselves what they were doing.

Let us not make the mistake of supposing that all follies and manias of this kind are permanently overcome and need not be feared any longer. The roots of popular error are ineradicable; they lie at the bottom of human nature; they can produce new growth and new fruits at any time. In this twentieth century the probable line on which the deductions will be drawn is in politics and civil institutions. The modern world has rejected religious dogmatism, but it has taken up a great mass of political dogmatism, and this dogmatism is intertwined with the interests of groups of men. If you accept the political dogmas of the eighteenth century and begin to build deductions on them you will reach a construction as absurd and false as that of witchcraft. The only security is the constant practise of critical

thinking. We ought never to accept fantastic notions of any kind; we ought to test all notions; we ought to pursue all propositions until we find out their connection with reality. That is the fashion of thinking which we call scientific in the deepest and broadest sense of the word. It is, of course, applicable over the whole field of human interests, and the habit of mind which insists on finding realities is the best product of an education which may be properly called scientific. I have no doubt that, in your lifetime, you will see questions arise out of popular notions and faiths, which will call for critical thinking such as has never been required before, especially as to social relations, political institutions, and economic interests.

Here I may notice, in passing, the difference between science and religion in regard to the habits of thought which each encourages. No religion ever offers itself except as a complete and final answer to the problems of life. No religion ever offers itself as a tentative solution. A religion cannot say: I am the best solution yet found, but I may be superseded tomorrow by new discoveries. But that is exactly what every science must say. Religions do not pretend to grow; they are born complete and fully correct and our duty in regard to them is to learn them in their integrity. Hence Galton says that "the religious instructor, in every creed, is one who makes it his profession to saturate his pupils with prejudice."<sup>3</sup>

Every science contains the purpose and destiny of growth as one of its distinguishing characteristics; it must always be open to re-examination and must submit to new tests if such are proposed. Consequently the modes and habits of thought developed by the study of science are very different from those developed by the study of religion. This is the real cause, I think, of the antagonism between science and religion which is vaguely felt in modern times, although the interest is lacking which would bring the antagonism into an open conflict. I cannot believe that this attitude will remain constant. I am prepared to believe that some of you may live to see new interest infused into our traditional religion which will produce an open conflict.<sup>4</sup> At present scientific methods are largely introduced into history, archæology, the comparison of religions, and Biblical interpre-

3. Hereditary Genius, p. 210.

4. Thomas Aquinas said that "science is sin except as pursued because it leads to a knowledge of God." Summa II, 2, Qu. 167, 1.

tation, where their effect is far more destructive than the mass of people yet know. When the antagonism develops into open conflict, parties will take sides. It is evident that the position of the parties on all the great faiths and interests of men will differ very widely and that each position will have to be consistent with the fundamental way of looking at the facts of life on which it is founded. It does not seem possible that a scientist and a sacramentarian could agree about anything.

There is another form of phantasm which is still in fashion and does great harm, that is, faith in ideals. Men who rank as strong thinkers put forward ideals as useful things in thought and effort. Every ideal is a phantasm; it is formed by giving up one's hold on reality and taking a flight into the realm of fiction. When an ideal has been formed in the imagination the attempt is made to spring and reach it as a mode of realizing it. The whole process seems to me open to question; it is unreal and unscientific; it is the same process as that by which Utopias are formed in regard to social states, and contains the same fallacies; it is not a legitimate mental exercise. There is never any correct process by which we can realize an ideal. The fashion of forming ideals corrupts the mind and injures character. What we need to practise, on the contrary, is to know, with the greatest exactitude, what is, and then plan to deal with the case as it is by the most approved means.

Let me add a word about the ethical views which go with the scientific-critical way of looking at things. I have mentioned already our modern view of manufactured documents, which we call forged. In regard to history it seems to me right to say that history has value just on account of the truth which it contains and not otherwise. Consequently the historian who leaves things out, or puts them in, for edifying, patriotic, or other effect, sins against the critical-scientific method and temper which I have described. In fact, patriotism is another root of non-reality, and the patriotic bias is hostile to critical thinking.

It must be admitted that criticism is pessimistic. I say that it must be admitted, because, in our time, optimism is regarded as having higher merit and as a duty; that which is pessimistic is consequently regarded as bad and wrong. That is certainly an error. Pessimism includes caution, doubt, prudence, and care; optimism means gush,

shouting, boasting, and rashness. The extreme of pessimism is that life is not worth living; the extreme of optimism is that everything is for the best in the best of worlds. Neither of these is true, but one is just as false as the other. The critical temper will certainly lead to pessimism; it will develop the great element of loss, disaster, and bad luck which inheres in all human enterprises. Hence it is popularly considered to consist in fault-finding. You will need to guard against an excess of it, because if you yield to it, it will lame your energies and deprive you of courage and hope. Nevertheless I cannot doubt that the popular feeling in our time and country needs toning down from a noisy and heedless optimism. Professor Giddings,<sup>5</sup> a few years ago, made a very interesting analysis and classification of books published in this country, from which he thought that he proved, statistically, that the temper of our people now is between ideo-emotional and dogmatic-emotional. By ideo-emotional he means inquiring or curious, and convivial; by dogmatic-emotional he means domineering and austere. We must notice, as limiting this test, that the book-market can bear testimony only to the taste of the "reading public," which is but a very small part of the population, and does not include the masses. Professor Giddings found that 50 per cent of the books published aimed to please and appealed to emotion or sentiment; 40 per cent aimed to convert, and appealed to belief, ethical emotion, or self-interest; 8 per cent aimed to instruct, were critical, and appealed to reason. The other 2 per cent contained all the works of high technical or scientific value, lost really in an unclassifiable residuum. This means that our literature is almost entirely addressed to the appetite for romance and adventure, probable or improbable, to sentimentalism, to theoretical interest in crime, marital infelicity, and personal misfortune, and to the pleasure of light emotional excitement, while a large part of it turns on ethical emotion and ignorant zeal in social matters. This accords with the impression one gets from the newspapers as to what the people like. The predominance of the emotional element in popular literature means that people are trained by it away from reality. They lose the power to recognize truth. Their power to make independent ethical judgments is undermined, and all value is taken out of their collective opinion on social and political topics. They are made day-dreamers, or philistines, or ready victims

5. *Psychological Review*, VIII, 337.

of suggestion, to be operated upon by religious fakers, or politicians, or social innovators. What they need is criticism, with all the pessimism which it may bring in its train. Ethics belong to the folkways of the time and place; they can be kept sound and vigorous only by the constant reaction between the traditional rule and the individual judgment. What we must have, on this domain also, is a demand for reality and a trained power to perceive the relation between all human interests and the facts of reality at the time existing.

COMMENT BY  
ISAIAH BOWMAN

I SEE on the first page a quotation from Karl Pearson, who warns against the idiosyncrasies of the individual mind in arriving at judgments. Upon this theme I have spoken in recent years, as I became more and more conscious of the warping of judgment by individual experience. I have put some of my reflections on the subject in a booklet entitled *The Graduate School in American Democracy*, which has just been published by the Office of Education at Washington. All that I have said on the subject has been said more neatly and more recently by a scientist whose address I had the privilege of hearing some time ago. In concluding his address on a scientific experiment which had produced a result less conclusive than he desired, he said, "We doubt this, though we would like to believe it." The ability and the willingness to make that statement is characteristic of the scientific spirit, marking a line of division between prejudice and judgment, between believing in what one desires to believe and believing what facts indicate one should believe.

On the second page Professor Sumner speaks of "phantasms or words" as the opposite of reality. Cardozo once said that judgments tend to beget in their own image. And one might add that judgments also tend to be formed out of images that originate in words or that are colored by words as apart from meanings based upon facts. But here I should like to raise a question as to what we mean by "facts." In a certain metaphysical sense there are no such things. The margins of almost all facts are woolly.



What Professor Sumner has to say on the next-to-the-last page of his essay, on aims in book publishing, finds a ready response in me this morning, because I have just received a letter in which a correspondent says that unless he can get a living by writing what he would like to write he will be obliged to turn to sensational writing in order to sell his stuff to the publishers. No doubt the publishers are selling the stuff he speaks of because they find that it pays. The publisher is in business: he buys and sells merchandise. Neither the book publisher nor the newspaper or magazine publishers can ignore this elementary fact. Each is bound to try to reach a wide public, and this is commonly done by adopting a low common denominator of interest. While music has an elevating influence, it can hardly be said to be the sole basis of civilization. Invite an audience to hear a musical program and you will have the hall filled. Invite them to listen to an analysis of deficiencies in county, state, or national government, and ask them to do something about it after hearing such an analysis, and you will have a corporal's guard. Life is so earnest that the man who has spent his day earning a living wants romance, adventure, and emotion at the end of the day.

In saying this I am not condemning romance, adventure, and emotion, but only emphasizing the point that they will not of themselves build a civilization, however much they adorn it. Civilization has hard tasks to perform, its proponents must sometimes choose the steep path. At times it has had to be fought for. For example, Lincoln said in his Second Inaugural, "The progress of our arms upon which all else chiefly depends. . . ." A low common denominator will neither make a civilization nor preserve it.

#### COMMENT BY

*KARL T. COMPTON*

**W**ILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER'S essay on "The Scientific Attitude of Mind" expresses so clearly and interestingly the nature of the scientific attitude in an environment containing other patterns of thought, and his ideas here expressed are so heartily

echoed in my own mind that it is impossible for me to write a critical comment. I shall therefore simply set down certain thoughts that occurred to me as I read the essay.

I was impressed by the fact that Pearson's statement of the aim and function of science is characteristic of the early stages in the development of science. It brings to mind the botanist who observes and classifies all manner of flowers and plants. As knowledge increases, science invariably comes to a later stage in which theories and experiments are performed in an endeavor to find an answer to the questions: "What forces or processes brought these aspects of nature to their present form and relationship? How may these forms be changed and what are the variables, operating back of the scene, which determine these forms and phenomena and their changes?" Here enter those aspects of science which we term "experimental" and "theoretical."

Sumner implies that he was quite conscious of this lack in Pearson's statement because early in the third paragraph he defines science in terms of the *methods* employed, and states "knowledge of reality acquired by *methods* which are established in the confidence of men. . . ."

In his exceedingly interesting contrast between the type of thinking characteristic of science on the one hand and religion on the other it occurs to me that there are still other patterns of thought, of which I shall give just one example. The system of law and the training of the lawyer develop in the latter certain characteristic methods of approach to problems, and we often find this approach carried over into nonlegal activities. For example, a large portion of our legislature is made up of men with a legal background. The recent public-utility holding-company act first listed about a dozen real or alleged abuses of the holding-company system. It then set forth a procedure for practically abolishing holding companies. A group of scientists or engineers would have approached this problem by listing not only the abuses and dangers of the holding-company system but also its advantages, and an attempt would have been made to seek a procedure which would avoid the dangers but retain the advantages. It would be very advantageous if this scientific approach could find larger expression in the policy-making bodies of our government.

## COMMENT BY

*WALDEMAR KAEMPFERT*

SCIENCE, as we know it, arose out of eighteenth-century liberalism. For the freedom of thought and speech which is the very essence of democracy is also the very essence of science. If the practice of democracy is what Sumner would have called a folkway, so is the practice of science.

Modern democracy is largely a political conception. The eighteenth-century egalitarians who formulated its doctrine knew nothing of mass production in our sense, knew nothing of steam-driven factories, railways, mechanically propelled ships. With the mechanization of society, democracy is faced with new problems. In a hundred and fifty years we have seen mechanical and electrical energy supplanting muscle; ships and railroads becoming mass carriers; mass production standardizing life; the mass generation and distribution of electrical energy and gas, with the gradual disappearance of individualistically operated prime movers; electrical communication designed at the outset for mass utilization; mass entertainment in the form of radio broadcasting, motion pictures, and now television. Mass consumption and production of anything on a national scale is impossible without organization and control.

Who are the organizers, the controllers? A few experts at the top—research scientists, engineers, and their financial backers. We have a new caste, a caste that owes its station not to birth or privilege but to sheer ability, a caste which is opposed to democratic principles because it believes in planning and direction from above. The question that confronts us is this: Can democracy retain its old freedom of thought, speech, and action and still enjoy the benefits of scientific advance? Are the technical experts and their financial supporters to rule the nation because they happen to design and build its industrial machinery and operate it for personal profit? Viewed in the light of these questions fascism and communism are social inventions designed to cope with the problems presented by science and technology.

Both science and society are dynamic. Both are evolving. Science exists for the benefit of mankind. If in its progress it becomes apparent that mankind is not deriving the fullest benefit of research—and

there is evidence enough that this is so—it is obvious that social changes are necessary, which is what the totalitarian states recognize. But to adapt science to a social philosophy, their formula, is simply to cripple research. What is called the “impact of science” is an impact on society. We are reduced, then, to the conclusion: Democracy is essential to freedom of research and thought in science. Democracy needs science to enrich life. It must change to make the most of science, even though the change may necessitate a change in democratic institutions and practices. But the freedom which is the very essence of democracy must remain constant. If that falls, science falls, and if science falls there can be no Newtons, Einsteins, Darwins.

## WHAT IS FREE TRADE?<sup>1</sup>

**T**HERE never would have been any such thing to fight for as free speech, free press, free worship, or free soil, if nobody had ever put restraints on men in those matters. We never should have heard of free trade, if no restrictions had ever been put on trade. If there had been any restrictions on the intercourse between the states of this Union, we should have heard of ceaseless agitation to get those restrictions removed. Since there are no restrictions allowed under the Constitution, we do not realize the fact that we are enjoying the blessings of complete liberty, where, if wise counsels had not prevailed at a critical moment, we should now have had a great mass of traditional and deep-rooted interferences to encounter.

Our intercourse with foreign nations, however, has been interfered with, because it is a fact that, by such interference, some of us can win advantages over others. The power of Congress to levy taxes is employed to lay duties on imports, not in order to secure a revenue from imports, but to prevent imports—in which case, of course, no revenue will be obtained. The effect which is aimed at, and which is attained by this device, is that the American consumer, when he wants to satisfy his needs, has to go to an American producer of the thing he wants, and has to give to him a price for the product which is greater than that which some foreigner would have charged. The object of this device, as stated on the best protectionist authority, is: "To effect the diversion of a part of the labor and capital of the people out of the channels in which it would run otherwise, into channels favored or created by law." This description is strictly correct, and from it the reader will see that protection has nothing to do with any foreigner whatever. It is purely a question of domestic policy. It is only a question whether we shall, by taxing each other, drive the industry of this country into an arbitrary and artificial development, or whether we shall allow one another to employ each his capital and labor in his own way. Note that there is for us all the same labor, capital, soil, national character, climate, etc.,—that is, that all the conditions of production remain unaltered. The only change which is

1. In *Good Cheer* for April, 1886, p. 7.

operated is a wrenching of labor and capital out of the lines on which they would act under the impulse of individual enterprise, energy, and interest, and their impulsion in another direction selected by the legislator. Plainly, all the import duty can do is to close the door, shutting the foreigner out and the Americans in. Then, when an American needs iron, coal, copper, woolens, cottons, or anything else in the shape of manufactured commodities, the operation begins. He has to buy in a market which is either wholly or partially monopolized. The whole object of shutting him in is to take advantage of this situation to make him give more of his products for a given amount of the protected articles, than he need have given for the same things in the world's market. Under this system a part of our product is diverted from the satisfaction of our needs, and is spent to hire some of our fellow-citizens to go out of an employment which would pay under the world's competition, into one which will not pay under the world's competition. We, therefore, do with less clothes, furniture, tools, crockery, glassware, bed and table linen, books, etc., and the satisfaction we have for this sacrifice is knowing that some of our neighbors are carrying on business which according to their statement does not pay, and that we are paying their losses and hiring them to keep on.

Free trade is a revolt against this device. It is not a revolt against import duties or indirect taxes as a means of raising revenue. It has nothing to say about that, one way or the other. It begins to protest and agitate just as soon as any tax begins to act protectively, and it denounces any tax which one citizen levies on another. The protectionists have a long string of notions and doctrines which they put forward to try to prove that their device is not a contrivance by which they can make their fellow-citizens contribute to their support, but is a device for increasing the national wealth and power. These allegations must be examined by economists, or other persons who are properly trained to test their correctness, in fact and logic. It is enough here to say, over a responsible signature, that no such allegation has ever been made which would bear examination. On the contrary, all such assertions have the character of apologies or special pleas to divert attention from the one plain fact that the advocates of a protective tariff have a direct pecuniary interest in it, and that they have secured it, and now maintain it, for that reason and no

other. The rest is all afterthought and excuse. If any gain could possibly come to the country through the gains of the beneficiaries of the tariff, obviously the country must incur at least an equal loss through the losses of that part of the people who pay what the protected win. If a country could win anything that way, it would be like a man lifting himself by his boot straps.

The protectionists, in advocating their system, always spend a great deal of effort and eloquence on appeals to patriotism, and to international jealousies. These are all entirely aside from the point. The protective system is a domestic system, for domestic purposes, and it is sought by domestic means. The one who pays, and the one who gets, are both Americans. The victim and the beneficiary are amongst ourselves. It is just as unpatriotic to oppress one American as it is patriotic to favor another. If we make one American pay taxes to another American, it will neither vex nor please any foreign nation.

The protectionists speak of trade with the contempt of feudal nobles, but on examination it appears that they have something to sell, and that they mean to denounce trade with their rivals. They denounce cheapness, and it appears that they do so because they want to sell dear. When they buy, they buy as cheaply as they can. They say that they want to raise wages, but they never pay anything but the lowest market rate. They denounce selfishness, while pursuing a scheme for their own selfish aggrandizement, and they bewail the dominion of self-interest over men who want to enjoy their own earnings, and object to surrendering the same to them. They attribute to government, or to "the state," the power and right to decide what industrial enterprises each of us shall subscribe to support.

Free trade means antagonism to this whole policy and theory at every point. The free trader regards it as all false, meretricious, and delusive. He considers it an invasion of private rights. In the best case, if all that the protectionist claims were true, he would be taking it upon himself to decide how his neighbor should spend his earnings, and—more than that—that his neighbor shall spend his earnings for the advantage of the men who make the decision. This is plainly immoral and corrupting; nothing could be more so. The free trader also denies that the government either can, or ought to regulate the way in which a man shall employ his earnings. He sees that the gov-

ernment is nothing but a clique of the parties in interest. It is a few men who have control of the civic organization. If they were called upon to regulate business, they would need a wisdom which they have not. They do not do this. They only turn the "channels" to the advantage of themselves and their friends. This corrupts the institutions of government and continues under our system all the old abuses by which the men who could get control of the governmental machinery have used it to aggrandize themselves at the expense of others. The free trader holds that the people will employ their labor and capital to the best advantage when each man employs his own in his own way, according to the maxim that "A fool is wiser in his own house than a sage in another man's house";—how much more, then, shall he be wiser than a politician? And he holds, further, that by the nature of the case, if any governmental coercion is necessary to drive industry in a direction in which it would not otherwise go, such coercion must be mischievous.

The free trader further holds that protection is all a mistake and delusion to those who think that they win by it, in that it lessens their self-reliance and energy and exposes their business to vicissitudes which, not being incident to a natural order of things, cannot be foreseen and guarded against by business skill; also that it throws the business into a condition in which it is exposed to a series of heats and chills, and finally, unless a new stimulus is applied, reduced to a state of dull decay. They therefore hold that even the protected would be far better off without it.

### COMMENT BY *BRUCE BLIVEN*

#### *Echo from the Age of Innocence*

**T**O read over again in 1940 Sumner's comment on free trade is to realize with a start what a tremendous distance the world has traveled in fifty-four years. What Sumner said was true in 1886; but it is so tangential to the real problems of the present day that it hardly has meaning any more.

Today foreign trade is controlled throughout most of the world,



not in the interest of domestic producers who are thus able to tax domestic consumers, but in the interest of a national policy which in some cases makes little sense economically and still less in any other frame of reference. We see goods dumped on the market over long periods of time, at or below the cost of production, not to advantage some capitalist but because some dictator thinks that by doing so he can make his country strong and enemy countries weak. These exports are subsidized in part by the government, which gets its funds from merciless taxation of its citizens, in part by capitalists, forced by that same government to operate with limited profits or none, and in part by the workers who, under the coercion of a bayonet or deceived by lying patriotic propaganda, toil longer and longer for less and less money and with a standard of living which steadily sinks.

"Free trade" always had a liberal sound, and it *was* liberal compared with protectionism in the interest of special groups of exploiters. Yet it was the child of *laissez faire* and quietly died with its parent some decades ago—and, I might add, a long time before the demise was noticed by the neighbors. Today our choice is not between free trade and control, but between bad control by the wrong people in the wrong interest and its opposite. If Sumner were alive today I think he would endorse the principle that it is of vital importance to the whole country what proportion of our goods are sent abroad, and to whom, and what we get in return. Sumner believed in freedom, even though he recognized how often it is inhibited by the folkways; but he would not have confused freedom with mere liberty of action; he would have seen the difference between freedom to light a fire in your furnace and freedom to burn down your house with a strong wind blowing toward your near-by neighbors.

COMMENT BY

FRANK M. O'BRIEN

AS an idealistic argument for free trade Mr. Sumner's essay can scarcely be excelled. Of course there has never been absolute free trade in the United States and Mr. Sumner recognized that when he said that the free trader did not revolt against import duties im-

posed for the purpose of collecting revenue for the government. What he objected to was imposing them to the extent that they became, in his view, the taxing of one American for the benefit of another. He denounced protection as "a domestic system, for domestic purposes, . . . sought by domestic means." By the same token free trade would be a strictly domestic policy, enabling the American to buy as cheaply as he could. The politicians of Sumner's day did not go the whole way with him. Even the platform of 1884 on which Grover Cleveland was elected assured the voter that while the tariff was a tax, this taxation could be reduced "without depriving American labor of the ability to compete successfully with foreign labor." Mr. Cleveland was so fiercely for low tariffs that in his annual message in 1887 he broke tradition and devoted the entire address to the tariff. In the campaign of 1888 the Democratic platform pointed to the appalling surplus of one hundred and twenty-five millions in the Treasury, the result of "superfluous taxation" and of itself a temptation which "debauched" the Republican party. Whether it is better to be debauched by a surplus than ruined by a deficit might be a subject for undergraduate debate. But the reason for harking back to the Cleveland period is that Sumner's "What Is Free Trade?" was published in 1886, when the tariff was the furious issue. It was a different sort of country from that of 1940 in everything except human nature. Farming was the leading pursuit, with thirty-five per cent of the population working at it; now the percentage is twenty. And "working" meant working and not getting government checks for making food scarce. The farmer of the Eighties had little cash income and he did not like a tariff which put up the price of clothing. So he could agree with Sumner that he was losing what the protected folk won.

The argument of the protectionists has not changed in these fifty-odd years. It remains what Sumner thought was the sacrifice of one man for the benefit of his neighbor and what a protectionist called then and calls yet a method of national self-preservation. But the argument of the free traders (low tariff advocates, if you prefer) has entirely changed. Secretary Hull does not follow the Sumner theory that the tariff is a strictly domestic affair. He adopts the nobler attitude that the free flow of goods is necessary for the restoration of the world in general and for the peace of Europe in particular. (What's

the news from Norway?) So he makes a "reciprocal treaty" with some government, and four-and-twenty other governments with the most-favored-nation clause in their treaties with the United States horn in on the reciprocity. Meanwhile another department of the government, perhaps not on speaking terms with the State Department, adopts a wages-and-hours law which makes it impossible for some American factories to compete with imports from countries which have no such law. It is hard to imagine Sumner, who wanted us to "allow one another to employ each his capital and labor in his own way," approving a wages-and-hours law. And surely it would puzzle Sumner, with his hatred of restrictions on the intercourse of nations and the states, to find it a violation of Federal law to move American-made goods in interstate commerce if they were produced in a factory which did not comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act, while at the same time foreign goods may move across state lines, even if coolie labor went into the making of them!

## LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBILITY<sup>1</sup>

FROM one end to the other of history, from one extreme to the other of the social scale, we can find no status in which men realize the kind of liberty which consists in doing as one pleases, or in unrestrainedness of action. If we should go on to consider the case of the learned man, or the statesman, or the monarch, or any other class and position, we should find the same. The Emperor Nicholas of Russia, who left the reputation of a military autocrat behind, complained that his Minister took a position before the chimney, and, to everything which the Emperor proposed, simply answered: "It is not permitted to do it." Liberty to do as one pleases is not of this world, for the simple reason that all human and earthly existence is conditioned on physical facts. The life of man is surrounded and limited by the equilibrium of the forces of nature, which man can never disturb, and within the bounds of which he must find his chances.

If that seems too ponderous and abstract for the reader, it may be interpreted as follows. Man must get his living out of the earth. He must, in so doing, contend with the forces which control the growth of trees, the production of animals, the cohesion of metals in ores; he must meet conditions of soil and climate; he must conform to the conditions of the social organization, which increases the power of a body of men to extort their living from the earth, but at the price of mutual concessions and inevitable subordination. Organization means more power, but it also means constraint, and, at every step of advancing civilization, while we seem to get nearer to this form of liberty, the means of emancipation proves a new bond. Such being the case, it is a plain delusion to suppose that we can ever emancipate ourselves from earth while we are upon it.

Yet men have, in all the higher forms of civilization, been determined that they would have this liberty. They have, as it were, determined that they would fly. They have made liberty a dream, a poetic illusion, by which to escape, at least for an hour, from the limitations of earth; they have put liberty at the beginning of all things, in the

1. *The Independent*, November 21, 1889.

"state of nature," or far on in the future, in a millennium. Within the last century, especially, they have elaborated notions of liberty as a natural endowment, belonging to everybody, a human birthright. Their experience has been that they did not get it, and, when this clashed with the smooth doctrines in which they had been educated, they have become enraged.

Now it will be most advantageous to notice that this notion of liberty has a certain historical justification, and, when historically considered, a relative truth.

The mediæval social and political system consisted of a complex of customs and institutions such that, when we come to analyze them, and find out their philosophy, we find they imply all the time that men are, but for political institutions and social arrangements, under universal servitude. The point of departure of administration and legislation was that a man had no civil rights or social liberty, but what was explicitly conferred by competent authority, and that the sum of rights which any person had were not such as belonged generally to all members of the society, but such as each, by his struggles and those of his ancestors, had come to possess. The modern view gets its interpretation, and its relative justification, by reference to and in antagonism to this; the doctrine of natural liberty as an antecedent status of general non-restraint was a revolt against the doctrine just stated. It meant to affirm that laws and state institutions ought to be built upon an assumption that men were, or would be but for law, not all unfree, but all free, and that freedom ought to be considered, not a product of social struggle and monarchical favor or caprice, but an ideal good which states could only limit, and that they ought not to do this except for good and specific reason, duly established. The nineteenth-century state is built on this construction. We are obliged all the time to assume, in all our studies, certain constructions, of which we say only that things act as if they were under such and such a formula, although we cannot prove that that formula is true. Institutions grow under conditions into certain forms which can be explained and developed only by similar constructions.

Modern civil institutions have been developed as if man had been, anterior to the state, and but for the state, in a condition of complete non-restraint. The notion has been expanded by the most piti-

less logic, and at this moment a score, or perhaps a hundred, eager "reforms" are urged upon grounds which are only new and further deductions from it. At this point, like the other great eighteenth-century notions which are also true relatively when referred back to the mediæval notions which they were intended to combat, the notion of abstract liberty turns into an independent dogma claiming full philosophical truth and authority. In that sense, as we have seen, it is untrue to fact.

When we turn to test the dogma of liberty by history and experience, we find immediately that the practical reason why no man can do as he likes in a human society is that he cannot get rid of responsibility. It is responsibility which fetters an autocrat, unless he is a maniac. It is that which binds the millionaire, which limits the savage who is responsible to his tribe, which draws narrow lines about the statesman, and which will just as inevitably fetter a democratic majority unless such a majority proposes social suicide. Responsibility rises up by the side of liberty, correlative, commensurate, and inevitable. Responsibility to nature is enforced by disease, poverty, misery, and death; responsibility to society is enforced by discord, revolution, national decay, conquest, and enslavement. Within the narrow limits of human institutions, liberty and responsibility are made equal and co-ordinate whenever the institutions are sound. If they are not equal and co-ordinate, then he who has liberty without responsibility incurs a corresponding loss of liberty, or servitude. Those men and classes who at any time have obtained a measure of abstract liberty to do as they like on earth, have got it in this way—at the expense of the servitude of somebody else. Thousands of men died that Napoleon Bonaparte might, in a measure, have his way; great aristocracies have won wide unrestraint by displacing the lives and property of thousands of others, when the aristocracies have been built up by a remission of responsibility.

The worst modern political and social fallacies consist in holding out to the mass of mankind hopes and affirmations of right according to which they are entitled by prerogative to liberty without responsibility. The current political philosophy, having fallen under the dominion of romanticism (except as to war and diplomacy), has apparently no power to do more than to follow and furnish platitudes for

the popular tendency, or to oppose all forms of liberty in the interest of socialistic equality. The prosecution of that line of criticism, however, lies aside from my present purpose.

I have now arrived at the point where the true idea of liberty, as the greatest civil good, can be brought forward. The link between liberty and responsibility can be established and upheld only by law; for this reason, civil liberty, the only real liberty which is possible or conceivable on earth, is a matter of law and institutions. It is not metaphysical at all. Civil liberty is really a great induction from all the experience of mankind in the use of civil institutions; it must be defined, not in terms drawn from metaphysics, but in terms drawn from history and law. It is not an abstract conception; it is a series of concrete facts. These facts go to constitute a status—the status of a freeman in a modern jural state. It is a product of institutions; it is embodied in institutions; it is guaranteed by institutions. It is not a matter of resolutions, or “declarations,” as they seemed to think in the last century. It is unfriendly to dogmatism. It pertains to what a man shall do, have, and be. It is unfriendly to all personal control, to officialism, to administrative philanthropy and administrative wisdom, as much as to bureaucratic despotism or monarchical absolutism. It is hostile to all absolutism, and people who are well-trained in the traditions of civil liberty are quick to detect absolutism in all its new forms. Those who have lost the traditions of civil liberty accept phrases.

The questions in regard to civil liberty are: do we know what it is? do we know what it has cost? do we know what it is worth? do we know whether it is at stake?

#### COMMENT BY

*H. W. PRENTIS, JR.*

CIVIL liberty is called by Professor Sumner “a great induction from all the experience of mankind in the use of civil institutions . . . a product of institutions, embodied in institutions, guaranteed by institutions.”

To me it seems something more. Nor does one need to reaffirm *in*

*toto* the eighteenth-century doctrine of natural rights to believe that liberty somehow lies behind institutions which have been created for various purposes with reference to liberty: sometimes to secure it for some and deny it to others; sometimes to widen the sphere of it for all. The desire for freedom from restraint, freedom to be one's self, and freedom to pursue one's own desires is hardly a creature of institutions. It is not even peculiar to the human race. If liberty is not "a natural endowment, belonging to everybody, a human birthright," it is at least a natural aspiration to which a large part of human achievement may be attributed.

Obviously one must admit that there is no such thing as absolute liberty for human beings. As men have freed themselves more from the forces of nature by associated effort and found greater safety and well-being in coöperation, they have had to conform more to the requirements of organization. Even as they form groups to safeguard freedom they must give up some individual freedom. In every civilization there has been the problem of adjustment between individual liberty and social control. Experience and circumstances have developed different adjustments among different peoples; their institutions have incorporated such adjustments. A sense of a natural right, however, seems to have been persistent throughout human history; it was not the creation of the philosophies of a few generations ago.

Though the area of liberty must be defined and redefined in law and institutions, and the balance between liberty and responsibility needs readjustment for every generation to keep the scales even, there seems to me something of a God-given instinct in this love of freedom—in whatever institutions it may find expression.

#### COMMENT BY

*ROGER WILLIAMS STRAUS*

THE essay on "Liberty and Responsibility" was written in 1889, but the conclusions reached meet the test of today. The test is a real one. Never before in the world's history have we seen a time when "the link between liberty and responsibility" has been so self-evident.



At no time since the Renaissance has the value of liberty as Sumner defined it been so powerfully challenged. It is for this generation to decide whether, in accordance with Sumner's thoughts as expressed in his essay, we are willing to assume the responsibilities that go with liberty. It would seem that some men and women are willing to assume these responsibilities but others are not. To them some other needs are paramount; they would prefer to avoid the responsibilities. The price to maintain liberty seems to them too high. But the example now being presented in those parts of the world where liberty has been lost is bringing to us here in America a greater appreciation of liberty's value and a greater willingness to shoulder the responsibilities. We are learning what liberty is by seeing the denial of it. We can estimate the cost of liberty by the fate of those heroic men and women who have fought for it in many countries in vain. We can judge of its worth by imagining ourselves in Germany or Russia of today, and weigh how much of what we hold most dear would be lost. We know that in many parts of the world liberty was at stake a few years ago and lost, which should warn us at least to be vigilant.

COMMENT BY  
*WILLARD L. THORP*

THE rejection of the idea that liberty is a deduction from the divine right of kings or from the natural birthright of all humans, led to the proposition that it is merely an accepted set of working arrangements, as Sumner calls it, "a great induction from all the experience of mankind." In 1890 it was possible to talk of a "status . . . in a modern jural state" as a set of institutional controls with some considerable degree of universal pattern, at least in the Western World. For the previous century social and economic evolution had seemed to give substance to an established body of individual "rights," or civil liberties.

Now it is apparent that any definition of liberty by institutions is no more secure than the institutions themselves. Today the 1890 pattern has been overthrown in more than one country; in others, seriously modified. The world is divided, and one basis of the division is

this very matter—the degree of liberty directly accorded to the individual. The helplessness of the individual to deal with such overwhelming factors as depression and war has opened the way to new schemes of working arrangements. A new induction is going on.

The degree and character of liberty has become less and less an end in itself, but rather a by-product of social and economic institutions directed at such differing purposes as economic security, racial priority, or national enhancement. In this world of education and propaganda, it is no longer self-evident that individuals can exercise independence in determining these objectives. If they fail to demand the preservation of their liberties in emphatic terms, the record shows that status is no assurance of permanence, and that democracy can change all too quickly into dictatorship.

## *RIGHTS*<sup>1</sup>

THE notion that there are such things as "natural" rights is due to the fact that rights originate in the mores, and may remain there long before they can be formulated (because it requires some mental development to be able to formulate them) in philosophical propositions, or in laws. The notion of "natural" rights is the notion that rights have independent authority in absolute right, so that they are not relative or contingent, but absolute.

The interests of men always clash in the competition of life. It is inevitable, on account of the organization of society, that this should be so. Even in the lowest form of the division of labor, that between the sexes, independent interests clash in the distribution of the products. The man there carries his point, if necessary, with the help of the other men, and a precedent is established by force, which through subsequent repetition becomes a law, and carries in itself a definition of rights between men and women.

The question of right or rights can arise only in the in-group.<sup>2</sup> All questions with outsiders are settled by war. It is meritorious to rob outsiders of property or women, or to invade any of their interests; it is meritorious also to repel and punish any efforts of theirs to invade the interests of one's group-comrades. War with group-comrades is "wrong," because it lessens the power of the in-group for war with outsiders. Here, then, is where other devices must be invented. Chiefs and medicine-men imposed decisions which were laws by precedent; they were inculcated by ritual; sanctioned after a few generations by the ghosts of ancestors; enforced by all members of the in-group. The right thing to do was to obey the tradition or "law." Obedience was duty. The notion of societal welfare was taught by the tradition, for the usage of ancestors admitted of no doubt as true and right. Thus law, order, peace, duty, and rights were all born in the in-group at the same time, and they are all implicit in the interest of war-power. The rights were most deeply implicit, and it took the longest time to draw them forth. They came out in proverbs, maxims,

1. Written between 1900 and 1906.

2. Sumner, W. G., *Folkways*, §§16 ff.

and myths—as rules of action in classes of cases, as dicta of the gods, in whose name the shamans spoke. The usual form of a law was a taboo—“thou shalt not.” The reason or motive of the taboo needed not to be understood; it was mystic and ritual, because it came from ancestors and was sanctioned by them. There was no reflection on it, for it was authoritative. It was the most imperative form of the mores, because the whole society would enforce it with the highest sanctions. There was no discussion about it; the rule was: obey or perish.

The earliest taboos probably were about religious rites and duties. In any primitive code the things forbidden range from things of primary and unlimited importance to trivial matters of ritual; in the ten commandments in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, the second, third, and fourth concern matters of little social importance compared with the last five. When taboos are analyzed, and their spirit is developed in a positive form, we get a proposition in the doctrine of rights. For instance, the taboo in the sixth commandment is on murder. The right of the murdered man to live is a positive proposition, capable of some ethical discussion and elaboration, but not capable of enactment in the form of a statute. The right to property is a positive proposition implicit in the prohibition of stealing, but no legislature could enact the right of property in a modern statute. It follows that the “rights” are philosophical propositions implicit in the taboos, and to the modern way of thinking, they seem to be assumed in them; but they were never formulated or thought by anybody before the taboo was started. Hence the modern philosophers invented the notion of “natural” rights to bring in the jural notions in advance of the law. In the American Declaration of Independence, the first paragraph is made up of propositions in political philosophy to serve as a basis of right for the secession of the colonies from the British Empire; they might all be admitted and yet not justify the secession. The Southerners clung to the dogmas and were led by them to believe that secession could be proved in debate, or deduced rationally in logic, but it is entirely impossible to establish rationally a right of revolution; it would be establishing a state on the prime doctrine of anarchy. So it seems that the notions of rights, which are logically antecedent to laws, never can be put into laws. They must remain in

the mores, and may be discussed in philosophy, but can be reduced to formulas not at all, or only very imperfectly.

In our times, the phraseology of rights is so current in the mores and in political discussion, that almost every proposition drops into that form. Every civilized state now contains groups who are recalcitrant and protesting, expressing their pain in terms of violated rights. They were the weaker parties in some collision of interests. There had to be a decision at last because life must go on; and the decision was enforced by the society. This was a use of force, just as men settled disputes with women by force. All the great fabric of what we now prize so highly and justly as rights, has come out of such acts of force against some defeated parties; the only difference is that, in thousands of years, the dictates of law and the adjustment of interests have been modified and revised by better views of life. Rights have come to be expressions of the rules of the game in the competition of life. The in-group has become stronger, especially in the higher civilization, as the contentment and satisfaction of all members have become greater. This has depended very much on the economic power of members of the group. If they could work and earn, save and enjoy in security, they have not cared to dispute about rights; but if the struggle for existence has been hard, they have been apt to think that a readjustment of the social conventions which governed the competition of life might be to their advantage. Hard times, therefore, have produced civil conflicts and re-definition of rights.

If in any state the civil power becomes weak, as in Turkey or Central America, rights become insecure, that is, non-existent. A man is heard declaiming and denouncing; he talks about his "rights" as if they floated in the atmosphere, and ought to come floating to him by a divine spirit in them, independently of all physical or conventional conditions. This is the modern mythology and political metaphysics which we have inherited from the eighteenth century. A defeated litigant comes out of the best court in the most civilized state, angry, denouncing injustice and violation of rights, and declaiming solemn "doctrines" of justice and liberty and, above all, of "rights." A legislative minority also propounds doctrines of rights in order to establish its case against votes; and when it fails, it hugs its great principles of rights. The philosophers, publicists, reformers, and agi-

tators always argue in terms of rights (especially natural rights); they become rebels, revolutionists, anarchists, dynamiters, in the name of rights, and, if they come to prison or the scaffold, they still declaim in terms of the same vocabulary. A criminal becomes a martyr if he can put his crime under some great generalization about rights. We have all been educated by the modern civil mores to think of rights as something metaphysical, above and behind laws and institutions, greater than they, and with some inherent power to transmute themselves out of oratory and resolutions into facts.

It is certainly far wiser to think of rights as rules of the game of social competition which are current now and here. They are not absolute. They are not antecedent to civilization. They are a product of civilization, or of the art of living as men have practised it and experimented on it, through the whole course of history. They must be enjoyed under existing circumstances, that is, subject to limitations of tradition, custom, and fact. To be real they must be recognized in laws and provided for by institutions, but a great many of them, being inchoate, unsettled, partial, and limited, are still in the mores, and therefore vague and in need of further study and completion by courts and legislatures. This further work will be largely guided by the mores as to cognate matters, and by the conceptions of right and social welfare which the mores produce.

## ***SOME POINTS IN THE NEW SOCIAL CREED<sup>1</sup>***

**A**S time runs on it becomes more and more obvious that this generation has raised up for itself social problems which it is not competent to solve, and that this inability may easily prove fatal to it. We have been boasting of the achievements of the nineteenth century, and viewing ourselves and our circumstances in an altogether rose-colored medium. We have not had a correct standard for comparing ourselves with our predecessors on earth, nor for judging soberly what we have done or what men can do. We have encouraged ourselves in such demands upon nature or human life that we are ready to declare our civilization a failure because we find that it cannot give us what we have decided that we want. We have so lost our bearings in the conditions of earthly existence that we resent any stringency or limitation as an insult to our humanity, for which somebody ought to be responsible to us. We draw up pronouncements, every paragraph of which begins with: "we demand," without noticing the difference between the things which we can expect from the society in which we live, and those which we must get either from ourselves or from God and nature.

We believe that we can bring about a complete transformation in the economic organization of society, and not have any incidental social and political questions arise which will make us great difficulty, or that, if such questions arise, they can all be succinctly solved by saying: "Let the State attend to it"; "Make a bureau and appoint inspectors"; "Pass a law." But the plain fact is that the new time presents manifold and constantly varying facts and factors. It is complicated, heterogeneous, full of activity, so that its phases are constantly changing. Legislation and state action are stiff, rigid, inelastic, incapable of adaptation to cases; they are never adopted except under stress of the perception of some one phase which has, for some reason or other, arrested attention. Hence, the higher the organization of society, the more mischievous legislative regulation is sure to be. Our discussions, therefore, only show how far we are from

1. *The Independent*, April 21, 1887.

having a social science adequate to bear its share of human interests by the side of the other sciences on which human welfare now depends, and, also, how great is our peril for lack of a harmonious development on this side.

We think that security and justice are simple and easy things which go without the saying, and need only be recognized to be had and enjoyed; we do not know that security is a thing which men have never yet succeeded in establishing. History is full of instruction for us if we will go to it for instruction; but if we go to it for information, being unable to interpret its lessons or its oracles, we shall get nothing but whims and fads. Now history is one long story of efforts to get some civil organization which could give security over an indefinite period of time. But no such civil organization has yet been found; we are as far from it as ever. The organization itself has eaten up the substance of mankind. The government of a Roman Emperor, a Czar, a Sultan, or a Napoleon, has been only a raid of a lot of hungry sycophants upon the subject mass; the aristocracy of Venice and other city states has been only a plutocratic oligarchy, using the state as a means to its own selfish ends; democracy has never yet been tried enough to know what it will do, but with Jacobinism, communism, and social democracy lying in wait for it on one side, and plutocracy on the other, its promise is not greater than that of the old forms. It remains to be proved that democracy possesses any stability and that it can guarantee rights.

We think that justice is a simple idea, comprehensible by the light of nature, when justice is really one of the most refined and delicate notions which we have to use, and one which requires the most perfect training for its comprehension. We think that it is a thing which we need only demand of our political institutions, in order to get it, when in fact the best institutions ever yet invented owe their greatest glory to the fact that they have succeeded in but remotely approximating to it.

We think that liberty and freedom are matters of metaphysics, and are to be obtained by resolutions about what is true. We are impatient of historical growth and steady improvement. We are irritated because our ideals fail, and we propose to throw away all our birthright of civil liberty, because a man, even in a free country, cannot have everything that he wants. We are inheritors of civil institu-



tions which it has cost generations of toil and pain to build up, and we are invited to throw them away because they do not fit the social dogmas of some of our prophets.

We think that, if this world does not suit us, it ought to be corrected to our satisfaction, and that, if we see any social phenomenon which does not suit our notions, there should be a remedy found at once. A collection of these complaints and criticisms, however, assembled from the literature of the day, would show the most heterogeneous, contradictory, and fantastic notions.

We think that this is a world in which we are limited by our wants, not by our powers; by our ideals, not by our antecedents.

We think that we are resisting oppression from other men, when we are railing against the hardships of life on this earth. Inasmuch as we are powerless against nature, we propose to turn and rend each other.

We think that capital comes of itself, and would all be here just the same, no matter what regulations we might make about the custody, use, and enjoyment of it.

We demand a political remedy, when what we want is more productive power, which we must find in ourselves, if anywhere. We want more power over nature, but we think that steam and machinery are our enemies and the cause of all the trouble.

We think that there is such a thing as liberty from the conditions of the struggle for existence, and that we can abolish monopoly, aristocracy, poverty, and other things which do not please our taste.

We think that we can impair the rights of landlords, creditors, employers, and capitalists, and yet maintain all other rights intact.

We think that, although A has greatly improved his position in half a lifetime, that is nothing, because B, in the same time, has become a millionaire.

We throw all our attention on the utterly idle question whether A has done as well as B, when the only question is whether A has done as well as he could.

We think that competition produces great inequalities, but that stealing or alms-giving does not.

We think that there is such a thing as "monopoly"; a simple, plain, definite, and evil thing, which everybody can understand and prescribe remedies for. We believe in the "Banquet of Life" and the

"Boon of Nature," although nature never utters but one speech to us: "I will yield you a subsistence, if you know how to extort it from me."

We think that we can have an age of steam and electricity, and not put any more brains into the task of life in it than our grandfathers put into living in an age of agricultural simplicity.

We find it a hardship to be prudent and to be forced to think; therefore we think that those who have been prudent for themselves should be forced to be so for others.

We think that we can beget children without care or responsibility, and that our liberty to marry when we choose has nothing to do with our position in the "house of have" or the "house of want."

We started out a century ago with the notion that there are some "rights of man"; we have been trying ever since to formulate a statement of what they are. Although these attempts have been made on purely *a priori* grounds, and without the limitations which would be imposed by an investigation of the facts of our existence on earth, nevertheless they have all failed. So far their outcome is: every man has a right to enjoy; if he fails of it, he has a right to destroy.

#### COMMENT BY

*WILLIAM L. CHENERY*

THE richness of William Graham Sumner's well-ordered mind was accorded a droll tribute when the title of one of his essays was made a spiritual defense of the first New Deal. Professor Sumner was essentially an individualist. He believed in hard work, clear thinking, and disciplined living. Yet his "Forgotten Man" merely as a phrase was used to focus popular emotional energy in support of governmental schemes that Sumner decried during his fruitful career as a scholar and as a citizen.

Sumner's penetrating comment is as vital today as when forty years and more ago much of it was uttered. He brought the then new methods of sociological analysis to a consideration of political assumptions. The light he threw upon specific problems of human rights still shines brightly. His remarks are still as fresh as news from the

European war front. In truth, his scholarly discussions go to the very heart of the challenge offered our democratic assumptions by the ideas of the dictators of Europe.

As a sociologist expert in the history of human customs Professor Sumner saw very plainly that the rights enjoyed by men vary with time and place and habit. He perceived there is no such thing as a natural or absolute right. The writers of our Declaration of Independence showed no such historical perspective. Rights are merely recognition of what has been earned or inherited by individuals or groups. Even so fundamental a right as justice is a complex balance of forces. In the involved relationships of our modern world the determination of justice even by intelligent men of good will is sometimes an immensely intricate and difficult undertaking.

More than any American of his generation William Graham Sumner taught us to consider these basic questions with whatever reason we were capable of using. His formula was to understand and to speak simply. We are struggling now as never before since Napoleon Bonaparte over the realities behind the glamorous words with which we have built our political structure. Sumner is an admirable guide and counselor in this troubled era. He can still teach us to look clearly at our objectives, to separate the important from the irrelevant debris of history, and to proceed with energy toward a lucidly perceived and a warmly desired destination. What more should we ask of a leader?

### COMMENT BY *VIRGIL JORDAN*

SUMNER'S characterization of the mass fantasy and popular economic and political illusion current in his day not only remains as valid as when "The New Social Creed" was written; its truth and significance have been vastly intensified and expanded in the half century since. The erroneous conception of the actual conditions of individual and national existence; the axiomatic assertion of automatic rights to enjoy uniform, permanent, and effortless freedom, security, and prosperity; and the belief in the benevolence, omnipotence, and

omniscience of the State in validating these rights—all these delusions which he so clearly and coldly describes have become more nearly universal, deeply embedded, and embodied in the manners, customs, and institutions of internal and international economic and political life. This degenerative social process has become, I think, more rapid and explicit during the past decade; and though in evident progress in Europe from the time when Sumner, and earlier Spencer, wrote of it, its manifest conquest of America has come only since the last preceding World War.

This economic and political apocalypticism is a phase of social disruption which has shown itself before in human history, but its twentieth-century manifestations have been determined, it seems to me, by two main factors. One, perhaps the most fundamental, is the unprecedentedly sudden and rapid expansion of production and population created by the use of coal-power driven machinery in the nineteenth century. This, and the swift expansion of applied science and invention which accompanied it, have been responsible for the widespread acceptance of the "horn of plenty," or "push-button" conception of economic processes—the unconscious assumption prevalent among all the people of our time that modern industry is an automatic, perpetual-motion mechanism, inherently capable of producing an unlimited amount of all desired goods and services without human effort, cost, risk, or sacrifice, and possible of indefinite self-replacement and expansion as though by a kind of parthenogenesis, under the appropriate political stimulation.

The second major factor that has created "the new social creed" is the breakdown of the educational system. This is too large a subject to discuss in these brief comments, but Sumner has touched upon it in many other essays, and he fully understood that the failure of our mass-instruction mechanism to develop any realistic or rational common understanding of the economic conditions of modern national life has been an important cause of the prevalence of the magical conception of modern industry and the primitive scientific superstitions which underlie mass-illusions about the way the world makes a living.

Sumner's essay on "Rights" is a natural, though somewhat more technical, extension of his comments on "The New Social Creed." The

current notions of natural or legal rights are quite in accord with the notions he has analyzed; but since he wrote, the process of social disintegration to which I referred in my comment on his other essay has carried their application much farther than he may have anticipated.

Rights, or their inverse form of traditions, taboos, institutions, or laws, are instruments of intra-group solidarity for purposes of inter-group competition or conflict. But in the Western nations, during the past quarter century, the groups have become smaller and more numerous under the political manipulation of the State. The number and variety of assertions of rights have multiplied, and inter-group aggression for purposes of exploitation, expropriation, oppression, persecution, or spoliation has become the leitmotiv of progressive politics. The international chaos of this time, in which a large part of the planetary population is engaged in a sanguinary and destructive struggle for assertion of rights of democracy, *Lebensraum*, or a new Asiatic order is in its ultimate meaning a magnification or extension of internal or intra-group aggression in each nation, in which many segments of these societies are asserting against each other rights of property, rights to security, prosperity, purchasing power, leisure, and what not. The State has become the custodian and instrument of all these fictive rights, and its task in trying to validate them has become so distracting and desperate that the easiest or only way out has usually been to annul them all by going to war against some other State. When rights become too troublesome they are likely to be converted into duties.

## *EARTH HUNGER OR THE PHILOSOPHY OF LAND GRABBING<sup>1</sup>*

**T**HE most important limiting condition on the status of human societies is the ratio of the number of their members to the amount of land at their disposal. It is this ratio of population to land which determines what are the possibilities of human development or the limits of what man can attain in civilization and comfort.

Unoccupied land has been regarded by at least one economist as a demand for men, using "demand" in the technical economic sense. I should not like to be understood as accepting that view. Wild land or nature cannot be personified as wanting labor—it is not even an intelligible figure of speech. Much less can we think of economic demand as predicable of land or nature. Economic demand is a phenomenon of a market, and it is unreal unless it is sustained by a supply offered in the market in exchange for the thing demanded. If it is really nature that we have in mind, then the globe rolled on through space for centuries on centuries without a laborer upon it. The bare expanse of its surface was the scene of growth, change, and destruction in endless series, and nature was perfectly satisfied. Nature means nothing but the drama of forces in action, and it is only a part of our vain anthropomorphism that we think of its operation as "progressive" in proportion as they tend towards a state of things which will suit us men better than some other state. It is an excessive manifestation of the same sentiment to talk of wild land as a demand for men. The desert of Sahara makes no demand for men; but nature is fully as well satisfied to make a Sahara, where such is the product of her operations, as to make the wheat fields of Iowa or Dakota. Even in Iowa and Dakota, nature offers men no wages for labor. There are the land, the sunshine, and the rain. If the men know how to use those elements to get wheat there, and if they will work hard enough for it, they can get it and enjoy it; if not, they can lie down and die there on the fertile prairie, as many a man did before the industrial organization had expanded widely enough to embrace those

1. Written in 1896; published in *The Yale Review*, October, 1913, III, 3-32.

districts. Nature went on her way without a throb of emotion or a deviation by a hair's breadth from the sequence of her processes.

It is by no means in the sense of any such rhetorical flourish or aberration that I say that the widest and most controlling condition of our status on earth is the ratio of our numbers to the land at our disposal. This ratio is changing all the time on account of changes which come about either in the numbers of the men or in the amount of the land. The amount of the land, again, is not a simple arithmetical quantity. As we make improvements in the arts a single acre is multiplied by a new factor and is able to support more people. All the improvements in the arts, of whatever kind they are, have this effect, and it is by means of it that, other things remaining the same, they open wider chances for the successive generations of mankind to attain to comfort and well-being on earth. All our sciences tell on the same ratio in the same way. Their effect is that by widening our knowledge of the earth on which we live, they increase our power to interpose in the play of the forces of nature and to modify it to suit our purposes and preferences. All the developments of our social organization have the same effect. We are led by scientific knowledge, or driven by instinct, to combine our efforts by co-operation so that we can make them more efficient,—and “more efficient” means getting more subsistence out of an acre, so that we can support more people, or support the same number on a higher grade of comfort. This alternative must be borne in mind throughout the entire discussion of our subject. When we have won a certain power of production, we can distribute it in one of two ways: we can support a greater number or we can support the same number better; or we can divide it between the two ways, employing a part in each way.

Here comes in what we call the “standard of living.” A population of high intelligence, great social ambition, and social self-respect or vanity will use increased economic power to increase the average grade of comfort, not to increase the numbers. The standard of living is a grand social phenomenon, but the phrase has been greatly abused by glib orators and philosophers. The standard of living does not mean simply that we all vote, that we are fine fellows and deserve grand houses, fine clothes, and good food, simply as a tribute to our nobility. The men who start out with the notion that the world owes them a living generally find that the world pays its debt in the peni-

tentiary or the poorhouse. Neither is the standard of living an engine which economists and reformers can seize upon and employ for their purposes. The standard of living is a kind of industrial honor. It costs a great deal to produce it and perhaps still more to maintain it. It is the fine flower of a high and pure civilization and is itself a product or result, not an instrumentality. If by careful education and refined living a man has really acquired a high sense of honor, you can appeal to it, it is true, and by its response it furnishes a most effective security for wide-reaching principles of action and modes of behavior; but the more anyone appreciates honor in character, the less he likes to invoke it loudly or frequently. It is too delicate to be in use every day. It is too modest to be talked about much. If a man brags of his honor you know that he has not got much, or that it is not of the right kind.

It is so with the standard of living. The social philosopher who realizes what it is, knows that he must not use it up. It is not to be employed as a means for economic results. On the contrary, to cultivate a high standard of living is the highest end for which economic means can be employed. For a high standard of living costs, and it costs what it is hardest for men to pay, that is, self-denial. It is not a high standard of living for a man to be so proud that he will not let his children go barefoot, incurring debts for shoes which he never intends to pay for; the question is whether he will go without tobacco himself in order to buy them. The standard of living is, therefore, an ethical product; and a study of the way in which it is produced out of social and economic conditions is useful to sweep away a vast amount of easy and empty rhetoric about the relations of ethical and economic phenomena, by which we are pestered in these days. The standard of living reacts on the social organism in the most effective manner, not by any mystical or transcendental operation, but in a positive way and as a scientific fact. It touches the relation of marriage and the family and through them modifies the numbers of the population; that is, it acts upon that side of the population-to-land ratio which we are considering.

Let us not fail to note, in passing, how economic, ethical, and social forces act and react upon each other. It is only for academical purposes that we try to separate them; in reality they are inextricably interwoven. The economic system and the family system are in



the closest relation to each other and there is a give and take between them at every point. What we call "ethical principles" and try to elevate into predominating rules for family and economic life are themselves only vague and inconclusive generalizations to which we have been led, often unconsciously, by superficial and incompetent reflection on the experiences which family and economic life, acting far above and beyond our criticism or control, have suggested to us.

So far we have seen that all the discoveries and inventions by which we find out the forces of Nature and subjugate them to our use, in effect increase the supporting power of the land, and that the standard of living, by intelligently ordering the way in which we use our added power, prevents the dispersion of it in the mere maintenance of a greater number.

It must further be noticed that all our ignorances, follies, and mistakes lessen the supporting power of the land. They do not prevent numbers from being born, but they lessen the fund on which those who are born must live, or they prevent us from winning and enjoying what the means at our disposal are really able to produce. All discord, quarreling, and war in a society have this effect. It is legitimate to think of Nature as a hard mistress against whom we are maintaining the struggle for existence. All our science and art are victories over her, but when we quarrel amongst ourselves we lose the fruits of our victory just as certainly as we should if she were a human opponent. All plunder and robbery squander the fund which has been produced by society for the support of society. It makes no difference whether the plunder and robbery are legal or illegal in form. Every violation of security of property and of such rights as are recognized in society has the same effect. All mistakes in legislation, whether sincere and innocent or dictated by selfish ambition and sordid greed, have the same effect. They rob the people of goods that were fairly theirs upon the stage of civilization on which they stood. All abuses of political power, all perversion of institutions, all party combinations for anti-social ends have the same effect. All false philosophies and mistaken doctrines, although it may take a long time to find out which ones are false, still have the same effect. They make us cast away bread and seize a stone.

All the old institutions which have outlived their usefulness and become a cover for abuses and an excuse for error, so that the wars

and revolutions which overthrow them are a comparative good, must also be regarded as clogs which fetter us in our attempts to grasp what our knowledge and labor have brought within our reach. In short, all these evils and errors bring upon us penalties which consist in this: that while with the amount of land at our disposal, its productiveness being what it is, and the power of our arts being what it is, and our numbers being what they are, we might reach a certain standard of well-being, yet we have fallen short of it by just so much as the effect of our ignorances, follies, and errors may be. We can express the effect of our mis-doing and mis-thinking by regarding it as so much subtracted from the resources and apparatus with which we are carrying on the struggle for existence. We make the mistakes, in large part, because we cannot convince ourselves what is error and what is truth. The element of loss and penalty which I have described is the true premium which is offered us for finding out where the truth lies. The greatest good we can expect from our scientific investigations and from our education is to free us from these errors and to save us from these blunders. In this view, it is certain that a correct apprehension of social facts and laws would advance the happiness of mankind far more than any discovery of truth about the order of physical nature which we could possibly make.

The adventurous voyagers who began to explore the outlying parts of the earth in the fifteenth century thought little and cared less about the peasants and artisans at home; but it was they more than any others who were fighting for the fortunes of those classes in the future. The very greatest, but, so far as I have seen, least noticed significance of the discovery of America was the winning of a new continent for the labor class. This effect was not distinctly visible until the nineteenth century, because this new patrimony of the labor class was not available until the arts of transportation were improved up to the requisite point at which the movement of men and products could be easily accomplished. Then, as we have seen in our time, the movement of men one way and food the other developed to great proportions. Is it not true, then, that this is the great significance of the discovery of America, and that we have as yet barely come to the point where we can see its significance? It is only later that the colonization of Australia has become important, and it is only at this moment that the colonization of Africa is beginning to

intensify the same effect. What is that effect? It is that when the pressure of population on land in western Europe was becoming great, the later improvements in the arts—above all the use of steam and the opening of the outlying continents—have, in two ways at the same time, relieved that pressure. This combination has produced an industrial revolution, which is bringing in its train revolutions in philosophy, ethics, religion, politics, and all other relations of human society; for whenever you touch economic and industrial causes, you touch those which underlie all the others and whose consequences will inevitably ramify through all the others. The philosophers and all the resolution-makers of every grade come running together and shouting pæans of victory to the rising power and the coming glory; and, therefore, they claim that they have made it all. It is totally false. They are themselves but the product of the forces, and all their philosophies and resolutions are as idle as the waving of banners on the breezes. Democracy itself, the pet superstition of the age, is only a phase of the all-compelling movement. If you have abundance of land and few men to share it, the men will all be equal. Each landholder will be his own tenant and his own laborer. Social classes disappear. Wages are high. The mass of men, apart from laziness, folly, and vice, are well off. No philosophy of politics or ethics makes them prosperous. Their prosperity makes their political philosophy and all their other creeds. It also makes all their vices, and imposes on them a set of fallacies produced out of itself. It is only necessary to look about us in the world of to-day to see how true this all is.

We may be very sure that the wheat from America has had far more effect on ideas in Europe than the ideas from America, and that the Old World aristocracies need care little for American notions if only American competition would not lower the rent of land. For the outlying continents affect not only those who go to them but also the whole labor class who stay at home. Even while they stay there the pressure of the whole reachable land-supply weighs upon the labor market and the land market at home; and it makes wages high, food cheap, and the rent of land low, all at once. That is what exalts the laborer and abases the landed aristocrat, working both ways in behalf of democracy and equality. To it we can trace the wild passion for equality and all the leveling philosophy of the age. This is what makes that passion and that philosophy so irresistible, whether for

the weal or the woe of the human race. For each man to have a wide area at his disposal, whether actually or only by economic effect spreading through the industrial organization, means that he has the conditions of existence within his control, that he is not ground down by poverty, that he is forced to seek no man's protection, that he is cowed by no fear, that he is independent and "free," that he can provide for his family without care and can accumulate capital too. If you ask him the reasons for all this, he will probably begin to talk about institutions and doctrines; but if you will study the case, you will find that the same forces made him and the institutions too; and his faith in the institutions is like that of a savage who thinks that he would not have had success in hunting but for the fetish around his neck.

We may now see the real philosophy of colonization. It is not simply because an old habitat becomes too crowded, although it is true that there is a kind of inertia, consisting of habit, love of home, fear of the unknown, differences of language, and so on, which keeps population settled until stress is felt. There is a great economic advantage in spreading such population as there is over all the land there is, although they cover it but thinly. This economic advantage is accompanied by a great social disadvantage. In a scattered population the social organization is low and the social activities are weak. Such institutions as churches, schools, libraries, and museums, which flourish only in great centers of population, are feeble or non-existent. The spread of population over a great area of land, however, puts the first absolute necessities of existence within easy reach of those who have nothing but muscular strength at their disposal. The internal movement of population in the United States has illustrated all this most obviously. The social inertia which has been mentioned is less effective in our old states to keep people from going to the new states than it is in Europe to prevent emigration to the new countries. Hence we find that Iowa has been largely settled by emigrants from Illinois, and Montana is now being settled by emigrants from Iowa. This is the phenomenon of earth hunger, the apparently insatiable desire to get more land; and the reason for it lies in the facts which have been mentioned. With more land, there are higher wages, because no one will work for wages which are convertible into less goods than the laborer could get out of the land when used in the

most lavish and wasteful manner. With more land, the manual unskilled laborer is raised in comparison with the skilled and educated laborer, that is, the masses are raised in comparison with the classes. When there is plenty of land, the penalties of all social follies, vices, and ignorance are light. Each man has plenty of the "rights of man" because he need only *be*, in order to be a valuable member of society; he does not need high training and education, as he would in an old and crowded society with a strict organization, high discipline, intense competition, and weighty sanctions upon success or failure.

These facts of the social order are of the most fundamental and far-reaching importance. They are the facts which control the fate of the human race and produce the great phenomena which mark ages of history. They are the facts which, since the great geographical explorations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, have spread the population of the European nations over the globe. The most enterprising nations seized the advantage first and have pushed it farthest. The movements of population have been accelerated by all the inventions which have facilitated transportation and communication.

Here we have reached a point at which an important distinction must be made. So far I have spoken of those phenomena of earth hunger which are economic and social. Men want more land without assignable limit, because in that way they get a good living more easily and improve their class position. Let us call this economic earth hunger to distinguish it from political earth hunger, which will now demand our attention; for no sooner have men begun to spread over the earth and colonize it than the question of political jurisdiction over the new countries must arise. Is this jurisdiction a care and a burden; or is it an enjoyable good and a means of glory? This question has not yet been answered. I hope to throw some light on it. Hitherto great colonies and dependencies and vast possessions in outlying territories have been regarded as producing national greatness and ministering to national glory; and to this day the civilized nations are acting as if it were the simplest common sense to seize more territory if at any time it was possible. By political earth hunger, therefore, I mean the appetite of states for territorial extension as a gratification of national vanity.

The distinction between economic earth hunger and political earth hunger is to be very carefully noted. If there is good wheat land in

Manitoba, the people of Minnesota and Iowa will want to go there and get the use of it. It is not because they have not enough where they are—there is no such conception as enough when more can be had. It is because they find an economic advantage in spreading over more. If they did not, they would not go. This is economic earth hunger. There is, however, in Manitoba, a civilized government with law, rights, and police; such being the case, there is no need that those who emigrate thither should assume the civil jurisdiction. In the case of Texas, on the other hand, in the early days of its settlement there was such need; the political extension was needed to support the economic extension, because Mexico was not furnishing the guarantees of peace and order. Everything in connection with that matter was construed by its bearings on slavery; and that meant, on the distribution of political power in our own body politic. The people of New England then denounced the economic earth hunger as well as the political earth hunger. In a calmer view of the retrospect, both appear justifiable in that case. The later aggression on Mexico and the appropriation of her territory was another matter. Still again, when, in our recent war flurry, it was proposed to conquer Canada, it was a case of genuine political earth hunger, which had no justification in anything, but was a project of pure outrage, cruelty, and aggression.

## COMMENT BY

*CHARLES A. BEARD*

THESE pages illustrate the elusive nature of thought about complicated human affairs and the oracular character of Mr. Sumner's essays on things in general. The author starts out with a proposition that apparently has all the exactitude of a formula in hydraulics: "The most important limiting condition on the status of human societies is the ratio of the number of their members to the amount of land at their disposal." Yet, on analysis, this imposing generalization seems to crumble into uncertainty. What are the other "important limiting conditions on the status of human societies"? What would a list look like, if it were made, and by what criteria

could one determine that the ratio of the population to the "amount" of land is "the most" important? But pass that by.

Mr. Sumner, it seems to me, knocks all the apparent rigor out of his opening proposition by what he says in the third paragraph: "The amount of land, again, is not a simple arithmetical quantity. As we make improvements in the arts a single acre is multiplied by a new factor and is able to support more people." In truth, then, it is not merely the "amount" of land, but the state of the arts, which limits the status of human societies; that is, unless we take into account other things, such as war or acts of sheer power. The status of Czechoslovakia is not wholly determined by the amount of land or the state of the arts. So the business becomes more complicated than any matter of "earth hunger."

The oracular character of Mr. Sumner's utterances is well illustrated by the statement: "If you have abundance of land and few men to share it, the men will all be equal." There was an abundance of land in the Southwest more than a hundred years ago, but it was extensively occupied by slaveowners and bondmen. There was once an abundance of land in the Middle West and it was at first largely occupied by fairly equal freeholders; but in time, as the rural population declined in relation to the "amount" of land, forty or fifty per cent of these "equal men" became tenants or field hands. Many facts do not square with the dogma.

Nevertheless Mr. Sumner's works are full of "electric sparks" which suggest a revision of old soothsayings. For example, it is seldom possible to find more suggestiveness than he crowds into the single line: "We may be very sure that the wheat from America has had far more effect on ideas in Europe than ideas from America." Of course, the proposition cannot be proved at all, but there is "a lot of truth" in it and the remark might well start a long train of thought and inquiry. Such is sociology. Such is Mr. Sumner. Without both we should be poorer in insight and understanding.

## WAR<sup>1</sup>

WE have heard our political leaders say from time to time that "War is necessary," "War is a good thing." They were trying to establish a major premise which would suggest the conclusion, "Therefore let us have a little war now," or "It is wise, on general principles, to have a war once in a while." That argument may be taken as the text of the present essay. It has seemed to me worth while to show from the history of civilization just what war has done and has not done for the welfare of mankind.

In the eighteenth century it was assumed that the primitive state of mankind was one of Arcadian peace, joy, and contentment. In the nineteenth century the assumption went over to the other extreme—that the primitive state was one of universal warfare. This, like the former notion, is a great exaggeration. Man in the most primitive and uncivilized state known to us does not practice war all the time; he dreads it; he might rather be described as a peaceful animal. Real warfare comes with the collisions of more developed societies.

The four great motives which move men to social activity are hunger, love, vanity, and fear of superior powers. If we search out the causes which have moved men to war we find them under each of these motives or interests. Men have fought for hunting grounds, for supplies which are locally limited and may be monopolized, for commerce, for slaves, and probably also for human flesh. These motives come under hunger, or the food-quest, or more widely under the economic effort to win subsistence. They have fought for and on account of women, which we must put partly under love, although the women were wanted chiefly as laborers and so, along with the slaves, would come under the former head. They have fought to win heads, or scalps, or other trophies, and for honor or dignity, or purely for glory; this comes under the operation of vanity. They have fought for blood revenge, to prevent or punish sorcery, and to please their gods; these motives belong under the fear of superior powers. It was reserved for modern civilized men to fight on account of differences of

1. Written in 1908. The original lecture form of writing has been retained.



religion, and from this motive the fiercest and most persistent wars have been waged.

Is there anything grand or noble in any of these motives of war? Not a bit. But we must remember that the motives from which men act have nothing at all to do with the consequences of their action. Where will you find in history a case of a great purpose rationally adopted by a great society and carried through to the intended result and then followed by the expected consequences in the way of social advantage? You can find no such thing. Men act from immediate and interested motives like these for which they have waged war, and the consequences come out of the forces which are set loose. The consequences may be advantageous or disadvantageous to men. The story of these acts and consequences makes up human history. So it has been with war. While men were fighting for glory and greed, for revenge and superstition, they were building human society. They were acquiring discipline and cohesion; they were learning cooperation, perseverance, fortitude, and patience. Those are not savage virtues; they are products of education. War forms larger social units and produces states; of the North American Indians, those had the intensest feeling of unity who were the most warlike.<sup>2</sup> The Netherlands form a striking example in modern history of the weakness of a state which is internally divided; the best historian of Dutch civilization tells us that the internal disintegration was always greatest in times of truce or of peace.<sup>3</sup> There can be no doubt that the Germans of to-day owe their preeminence in industry and science to the fact that they are a highly disciplined nation. A Portuguese sociologist says that "War is the living fountain from which flows the entire society."<sup>4</sup> If we fix our minds on the organic growth and organization of society, this assertion is not exaggerated. An American sociologist<sup>5</sup> says that "in spite of the countless miseries which follow in its train, war has probably been the highest stimulus to racial progress. It is the most potent excitant known to all the faculties." The great conquests have destroyed what was effete and opened the way for

2. Am. Anth., N. S., IV, 279.

3. Van Duyl, C. F.: *Overzicht der Beschavingsgeschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Volk*, 190.

4. Martins, J. P. Oliveira: *As Raças Humanas*, etc., II, 55.

5. Brinton, D. G.: *Races and Peoples*, 76.

what was viable. What appalls us, however, is the frightful waste of this process of evolution by war—waste of life and waste of capital. It is this waste which has made the evolution of civilization so slow.

The fact that the new world is removed to such a distance from the old world made it possible for men to make a new start here. It was possible to break old traditions, to revise institutions, and to think out a new philosophy to fit an infant society, at the same time that whatever there was in the inheritance from the old world which seemed good and available might be kept. It was a marvelous opportunity; to the student of history and human institutions it seems incredible that it ever could have been offered. The men who founded this republic recognized that opportunity and tried to use it. It is we who are now here who have thrown it away; we have decided that instead of working out the advantages of it by peace, simplicity, domestic happiness, industry and thrift, we would rather do it in the old way by war and glory, alternate victory and calamity, adventurous enterprises, grand finance, powerful government, and great social contrasts of splendor and misery. Future ages will look back to us with amazement and reproach that we should have made such a choice in the face of such an opportunity and should have entailed on them the consequences—for the opportunity will never come again.

If we look at these facts about peace-laws and institutions and the formation of peace-groups in connection with the facts previously presented about the causes of war and the taste for war, we see that militancy and peacefulness have existed side by side in human society from the beginning just as they exist now. A peaceful society must be industrial because it must produce instead of plundering; it is for this reason that the industrial type of society is the opposite of the militant type. In any state on the continent of Europe to-day these two types of societal organization may be seen interwoven with each other and fighting each other. Industrialism builds up; militancy wastes. If a railroad is built, trade and intercourse indicate a line on which it ought to run; military strategy, however, overrules this and requires that it run otherwise. Then all the interests of trade and intercourse must be subjected to constant delay and expense because the line does not conform to them. Not a discovery or invention is made but the war and navy bureaus of all the great nations seize it to see what use can be made of it in war. It is evident that men love war;

when two hundred thousand men in the United States volunteer in a month for a war with Spain which appeals to no sense of wrong against their country, and to no other strong sentiment of human nature, when their lives are by no means monotonous or destitute of interest, and where life offers chances of wealth and prosperity, the pure love of adventure and war must be strong in our population. Europeans who have to do military service have no such enthusiasm for war as war. The presence of such a sentiment in the midst of the most purely industrial state in the world is a wonderful phenomenon. At the same time the social philosophy of the modern civilized world is saturated with humanitarianism and flabby sentimentalism. The humanitarianism is in the literature; by it the reading public is led to suppose that the world is advancing along some line which they call "progress" towards peace and brotherly love. Nothing could be more mistaken. We read of fist-law and constant war in the Middle Ages and think that life must have been full of conflicts and bloodshed then; but modern warfare bears down on the whole population with a frightful weight through all the years of peace. Never, from the day of barbarism down to our own time, has every man in a society been a soldier until now; and the armaments of to-day are immensely more costly than ever before. There is only one limit possible to the war preparations of a modern European state; that is, the last man and the last dollar it can control. What will come of the mixture of sentimental social philosophy and warlike policy? There is only one thing rationally to be expected, and that is a frightful effusion of blood in revolution and war during the century now opening.

It is said that there are important offsets to all the burden and harm of this exaggerated militancy. That is true. Institutions and customs in human society are never either all good or all bad. We cannot adopt either peacefulness or warlikeness as a sole true philosophy. Military discipline educates; military interest awakens all the powers of men, so that they are eager to win and their ingenuity is quickened to invent new and better weapons. In history the military inventions have led the way and have been afterwards applied to industry. Chemical inventions were made in the attempt to produce combinations which would be destructive in war; we owe some of our most useful substances to discoveries which were made in this effort.

The skill of artisans has been developed in making weapons, and then that skill has been available for industry. The only big machines which the ancients ever made were battering-rams, catapults, and other engines of war. The construction of these things familiarized men with mechanical devices which were capable of universal application. Gunpowder was discovered in the attempt to rediscover Greek fire; it was a grand invention in military art but we should never have had our canals, railroads, and other great works without such explosives. Again, we are indebted to the chemical experiments in search of military agents for our friction matches.

War also develops societal organization; it produces political institutions and classes. In the past these institutions and classes have been attended by oppression and by the exploitation of man by man; nevertheless, the more highly organized society has produced gains for all its members, including the oppressed or their posterity. The social exploitation is not essential to the organization, and it may be prevented by better provisions. In long periods of peace the whole societal structure becomes fixed in its adjustments and the functions all run into routine. Vested interests get an established control; some classes secure privileges and establish precedents, while other classes form habits of acquiescence. Traditions acquire a sacred character and philosophical doctrines are taught in churches and schools which make existing customs seem to be the "eternal order of nature." It becomes impossible to find a standing-ground from which to attack abuses and organize reform. Such was the case in France in the eighteenth century. By war new social powers break their way and create a new order. The student is tempted to think that even a great social convulsion is worth all it costs. What other force could break the bonds and open the way? But that is not the correct inference, because war and revolution never produce what is wanted, but only some mixture of the old evils with new ones; what is wanted is a peaceful and rational solution of problems and situations—but that requires great statesmanship and great popular sense and virtue. In the past the work has been done by war and revolution, with haphazard results and great attendant evils. To take an example from our own history: the banking and currency system of the United States, in 1860, was at a deadlock; we owe the national bank system, which was a grand reform of currency and banking, to the Civil War. It is

impossible to see how else we could have overcome the vested interests and could have extricated ourselves from our position. It was no purpose of the war to reform the currency, but it gave an incidental opportunity and we had to win from it what we could.

There is another effect of war which is less obvious but more important. During a period of peace, rest, and routine, powers are developed which are in reality societal variations, among which a certain societal selection should take place. Here comes in the immense benefit of real liberty, because, if there is real liberty, a natural selection results; but if there is social prejudice, monopoly, privilege, orthodoxy, tradition, popular delusion, or any other restraint on liberty, selection does not occur. War operates a rude and imperfect selection. Our Civil War may serve as an example; think of the public men who were set aside by it and of the others who were brought forward by it, and compare them in character and ideas. Think of the doctrines which were set aside as false, and of the others which were established as true; also of the constitutional principles which were permanently stamped as heretical or orthodox. As a simple example, compare the position and authority of the president of the United States as it was before and as it has been since the Civil War. The Germans tell of the ruthless and cruel acts of Napoleon in Germany, and all that they say is true; but he did greater services to Germany than any other man who can be mentioned. He tore down the relics of mediævalism and set the powers of the nation to some extent free from the fetters of tradition; we do not see what else could have done it. It took another war in 1870 to root out the traditional institutions and make way for the new ones. Of course the whole national life responded to this selection. The Roman state was a selfish and pitiless subjugation of all the rest of mankind. It was built on slavery, it cost inconceivable blood and tears, and it was a grand system of extortion and plunder, but it gave security and peace under which the productive powers of the provinces expanded and grew. The Roman state gave discipline and organization and it devised institutions; the modern world has inherited societal elements from it which are invaluable. One of the silliest enthusiasms which ever got control of the minds of a great body of men was the Crusades, but the Crusades initiated a breaking up of the stagnation of the Dark Ages and an emancipation of the social forces of Europe. They ex-

erted a selective effect to destroy what was barbaric and deadening and to foster what had new hope in it by furnishing a stimulus to thought and knowledge.

A society needs to have a ferment in it; sometimes an enthusiastic delusion or an adventurous folly answers the purpose. In the modern world the ferment is furnished by economic opportunity and hope of luxury. In other ages it has often been furnished by war. Therefore some social philosophers have maintained that the best course of human affairs is an alternation of peace and war.<sup>6</sup> Some of them also argue that the only unity of the human race which can ever come about must be realized from the survival of the fittest in a war of weapons, in a conflict of usages, and in a rivalry issuing in adaptability to the industrial organization. It is not probable that aborigines will ever in the future be massacred in masses, as they have been in the past, but the case is even worse when, like our Indians for instance, they are set before a fatal dilemma. They cannot any longer live in their old way; they must learn to live by unskilled labor or by the mechanic arts. This, then, is the dilemma: to enter into the civilized industrial organization or to die out. If it had been possible for men to sit still in peace without civilization, they never would have achieved civilization; it is the iron spur of the nature-process which has forced them on, and one form of the nature-process has been the attack of some men upon others who were weaker than they.

We find, then, that in the past as a matter of fact war has played a great part in the irrational nature-process by which things have come to pass. But the nature-processes are frightful; they contain no allowance for the feelings and interests of individuals—for it is only individuals who have feelings and interests. The nature-elements never suffer and they never pity. If we are terrified at the nature-processes there is only one way to escape them; it is the way by which men have always evaded them to some extent; it is by knowledge, by rational methods, and by the arts. The facts which have been presented about the functions of war in the past are not flattering to the human reason or conscience. They seem to show that we are as much indebted for our welfare to base passion as to noble and intelligent endeavor. At the present moment things do not look much better. We talk of

6. Gumplowicz, L.: *Grundriss der Sociologie*, 125.

civilizing lower races, but we never have done it yet; we have exterminated them. Our devices for civilizing them have been as disastrous to them as our firearms. At the beginning of the twentieth century the great civilized nations are making haste, in the utmost jealousy of each other, to seize upon all the outlying parts of the globe; they are vying with each other in the construction of navies by which each may defend its share against the others. What will happen? As they are preparing for war they certainly will have war, and their methods of colonization and exploitation will destroy the aborigines. In this way the human race will be civilized—but by the extermination of the uncivilized—unless the men of the twentieth century can devise plans for dealing with aborigines which are better than any which have yet been devised. No one has yet found any way in which two races, far apart in blood and culture, can be amalgamated into one society with satisfaction to both. Plainly, in this matter which lies in the immediate future, the only alternatives to force and bloodshed are more knowledge and more reason.

Shall any statesman, therefore, ever dare to say that it would be well, at a given moment, to have a war, lest the nation fall into the vices of industrialism and the evils of peace? The answer is plainly: No! War is never a handy remedy, which can be taken up and applied by routine rule. No war which can be avoided is just to the people who have to carry it on, to say nothing of the enemy. War is like other evils; it must be met when it is unavoidable, and such gain as can be got from it must be won. In the forum of reason and deliberation war never can be anything but a makeshift, to be regretted; it is the task of the statesman to find rational means to the same end. A statesman who proposes war as an instrumentality admits his incompetency; a politician who makes use of war as a counter in the game of parties is a criminal.

Can peace be universal? There is no reason to believe it. It is a fallacy to suppose that by widening the peace-group more and more it can at last embrace all mankind. What happens is that, as it grows bigger, differences, discords, antagonisms, and war begin inside of it on account of the divergence of interests. Since evil passions are a part of human nature and are in all societies all the time, a part of the energy of the society is constantly spent in repressing them. If

all nations should resolve to have no armed ships any more, pirates would reappear upon the ocean; the police of the seas must be maintained. We could not dispense with our militia; we have too frequent need of it now. But police defense is not war in the sense in which I have been discussing it. War, in the future, will be the clash of policies of national vanity and selfishness when they cross each other's path.

If you want war, nourish a doctrine. Doctrines are the most frightful tyrants to which men ever are subject, because doctrines get inside of a man's own reason and betray him against himself. Civilized men have done their fiercest fighting for doctrines. The reconquest of the Holy Sepulcher, "the balance of power," "no universal dominion," "trade follows the flag," "he who holds the land will hold the sea," "the throne and the altar," the revolution, the faith—these are the things for which men have given their lives. What are they all? Nothing but rhetoric and phantasms. Doctrines are always vague; it would ruin a doctrine to define it, because then it could be analyzed, tested, criticised, and verified; but nothing ought to be tolerated which cannot be so tested. Somebody asks you with astonishment and horror whether you do not believe in the Monroe Doctrine. You do not know whether you do or not, because you do not know what it is; but you do not dare to say that you do not, because you understand that it is one of the things which every good American is bound to believe in. Now when any doctrine arrives at that degree of authority, the name of it is a club which any demagogue may swing over you at any time and apropos of anything. In order to describe a doctrine we must have recourse to theological language. A doctrine is an article of faith. It is something which you are bound to believe, not because you have some rational grounds for believing it true, but because you belong to such and such a church or denomination. The nearest parallel to it in politics is the "reason of state." The most frightful injustice and cruelty which has ever been perpetrated on earth has been due to the reason of state. Jesus Christ was put to death for the reason of state; Pilate said that he found no fault in the accused, but he wanted to keep the Jews quiet and one man crucified more or less was of no consequence. None of these metaphysics ought to be tolerated in a free state. A policy in a state we can understand; for instance it was the policy of the United States at the end



of the eighteenth century to get the free navigation of the Mississippi to its mouth, even at the expense of war with Spain. That policy had reason and justice in it; it was founded in our interests; it had positive form and definite scope. A doctrine is an abstract principle; it is necessarily absolute in its scope and abstruse in its terms; it is a metaphysical assertion. It is never true, because it is absolute, and the affairs of men are all conditioned and relative.

The process by which such catchwords grow is the old popular mythologizing. Your Monroe Doctrine becomes an entity, a being, a lesser kind of divinity, entitled to reverence and possessed of prestige, so that it allows of no discussion or deliberation. The President of the United States talks about the Monroe Doctrine and he tells us solemnly that it is true and sacred, whatever it is. He even undertakes to give some definition of what he means by it; but the definition which he gives binds nobody, either now or in the future, any more than what Monroe and Adams meant by it binds anybody now not to mean anything else. He says that, on account of the doctrine, whatever it may be, we must have a big navy. In this, at least, he is plainly in the right; if we have the doctrine, we shall need a big navy. The Monroe Doctrine is an exercise of authority by the United States over a controversy between two foreign states, if one of them is in America, combined with a refusal of the United States to accept any responsibility in connection with the controversy. That is a position which is sure to bring us into collision with other States, especially because it will touch their vanity, or what they call their honor—or it will touch our vanity, or what we call our honor, if we should ever find ourselves called upon to “back down” from it. Therefore it is very true that we must expect to need a big navy if we adhere to the doctrine. What can be more contrary to sound statesmanship and common sense than to put forth an abstract assertion which has no definite relation to any interest of ours now at stake, but which has in it any number of possibilities of producing complications which we cannot foresee, but which are sure to be embarrassing when they arise!

What has just been said suggests a consideration of the popular saying, “In time of peace prepare for war.” If you prepare a big army and navy and are all ready for war, it will be easy to go to war;

the military and naval men will have a lot of new machines and they will be eager to see what they can do with them. There is no such thing nowadays as a state of readiness for war. It is a chimera, and the nations which pursue it are falling into an abyss of wasted energy and wealth. When the army is supplied with the latest and best rifles, someone invents a new field gun; then the artillery must be provided with that before we are ready. By the time we get the new gun, somebody has invented a new rifle and our rival nation is getting that; therefore we must have it, or one a little better. It takes two or three years and several millions to do that. In the meantime somebody proposes a more effective organization which must be introduced; signals, balloons, dogs, bicycles, and every other device and invention must be added, and men must be trained to use them all. There is no state of readiness for war; the notion calls for never-ending sacrifices. It is a fallacy. It is evident that to pursue such a notion with any idea of realizing it would absorb all the resources and activity of the state; this the great European states are now proving by experiment. A wiser rule would be to make up your mind soberly what you want, peace or war, and then to get ready for what you want; for what we prepare for is what we shall get.

## COMMENT BY

*EDWIN BORCHARD*

**W**ILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER'S essay on war is a classic because it presents certain fundamental truths about human nature and human conduct. Sumner had read history to a purpose, so that he knew the creature called man. He therefore hazarded little in asserting that certain behavior patterns led man alternately into constructive efforts and destructive orgies. As early as 1900 Sumner felt certain that the mixture of flabby sentimentality and war-like policy which distinguishes the Western industrial state, would lead in the twentieth century to "a frightful effusion of blood in revolution and war." Nevertheless he realized that the United States was singularly free from the traditional motives that led other countries to

war, namely, hunger, vanity, and the fear of superior powers. He therefore concluded that whereas militancy might be forced on other countries, in the United States it was deliberate choice. He felt that the national heritage, an opportunity for unfettered well-being which had never before come to any group and which America's early statesmen fully appreciated, was being frittered away by their successors. We have been told of prehistoric mastodons whose heads grew smaller—and presumably softer—as their bodies grew larger. Perhaps a biological explanation accounts for the extraordinary current domination of the body politic by doctrines and slogans which undermine the reason and promote irrational emotional crusades, now made more dangerous by the fine art of propaganda.

Sumner breaks a lance against the amorphous Monroe Doctrine whose varied interpretations he characterizes as rhetoric and phantasms, provocative of war. What would Sumner have thought of the modern crop of war-making slogans, such as “‘enforcing peace’ against ‘aggressors’”; “collective security”; “the war to end war”; “peace is indivisible”; “neutrality is immoral”; “war anywhere affects the United States” (a charter for continuous intervention); “acts of aggression against sister nations”; “isolation is impossible”; “the Open Door”; “the rising tide of lawlessness”; “solemn obligation not to resort to force”; “democracy and international good faith”; “the sanctity of treaties”; “the maintenance of international morality”; “‘treaty-breakers’ must be punished”; “moral embargoes”; “‘embargoes’ and ‘sanctions’ will ‘prevent war’”; “encouragement of orderly processes”; and “methods short of war”? Sumner's words should be emblazoned in every Foreign Office:

What can be more contrary to sound statesmanship and common sense than to put forth an abstract assertion which has no definite relation to any interest of ours now at stake, but which has in it any number of possibilities of producing complications which we cannot foresee, but which are sure to be embarrassing when they arise!

No wonder the United States is now preparing for war by enormous and unprecedented expenditures in excess of six billion dollars for the fiscal year 1941. As Sumner said, “What we prepare for is what we shall get.”

COMMENT BY

CHARLES SEYMOUR

IF, when this lecture was delivered, any of Sumner's audience questioned his sense of realities, that question has been definitely answered in the most affirmative and melancholy form by the history of the past twenty-five years. "What will come?" he asks in 1903, "of the mixture of sentimental social philosophy and warlike policy? There is only one thing rationally to be expected, and that is a frightful effusion of blood in revolution and war during the century now opening." History has emphasized his appreciation of the danger of doctrines in the field of international relations, as indeed in domestic politics. "If you want war, nourish a doctrine." "Self-determination," "collective security," "the have-nots *vs.* the haves," "racial purity," "*Lebensraum*," "the New Deal"—have all blurred the approach to problems of international competition which might have been settled on a basis of reasonable compromise that would have made industrial development possible. Once the war of ideologies begins, such compromise is impossible. We in the United States at the moment are in danger of subjection to doctrinal tyrannies—"interventionism," "isolationism," and the like. The failure of the League of Nations as a political institution resulted largely from the fact that the dominant powers of Europe paid lip service to the idealistic doctrines of the League but neglected to utilize it as a practical institution that would foster the method of "antagonistic coöperation."

What we should chiefly take to heart is Sumner's insistence upon the necessity of framing a clear-cut policy, a policy that rests upon a rational basis. "Make up your mind soberly what you want. . . . What we prepare for is what we shall get." In Europe, international disaster has resulted largely from the failure of the states victorious in the last war to produce the leadership essential to the formation and continuance of a steady policy; without a clearly defined policy vigorously executed, Europe came to find herself at the mercy of the dictators who were at once determined and aggressive. We may profit by the lesson, decide what we want, and "get ready" for it.



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